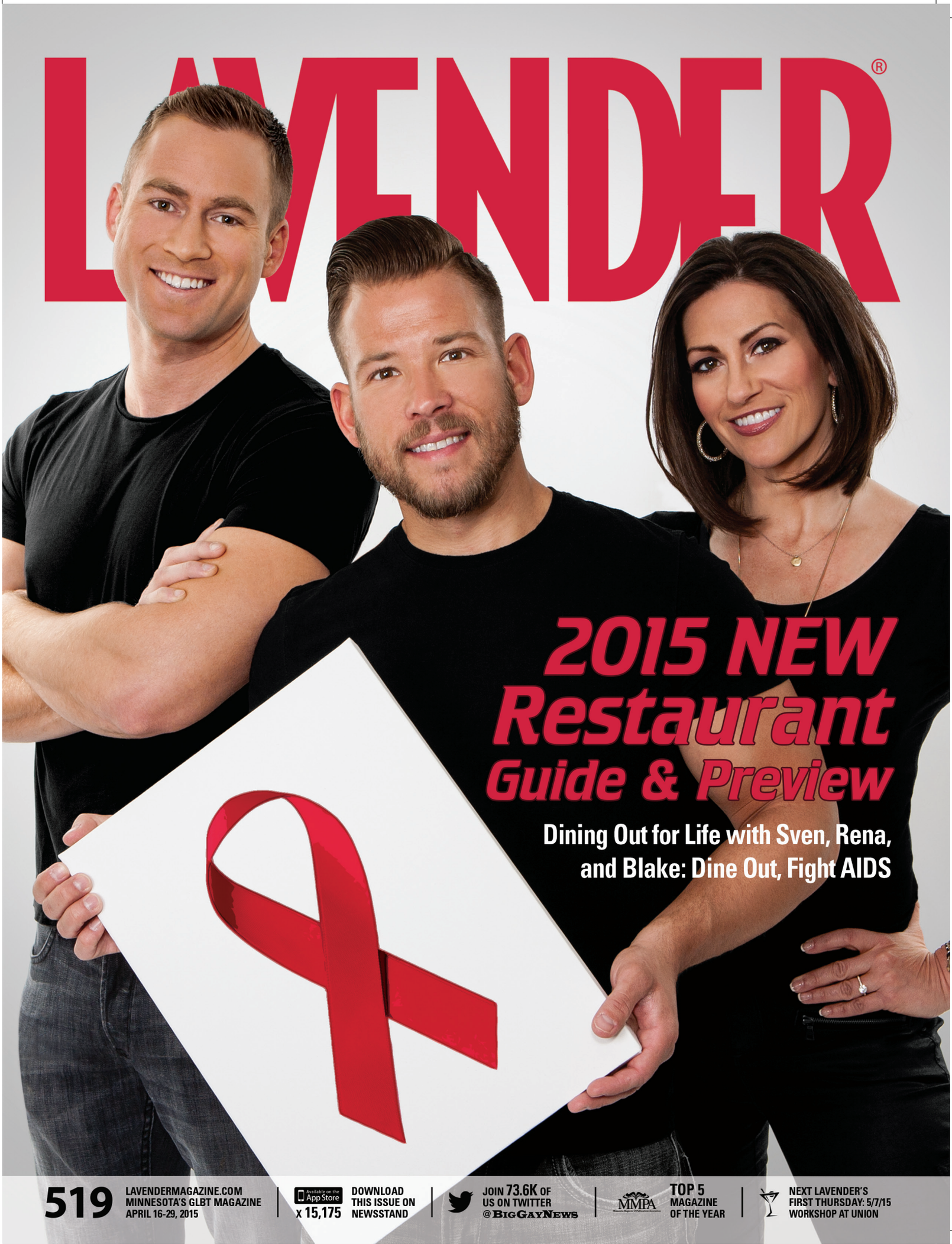
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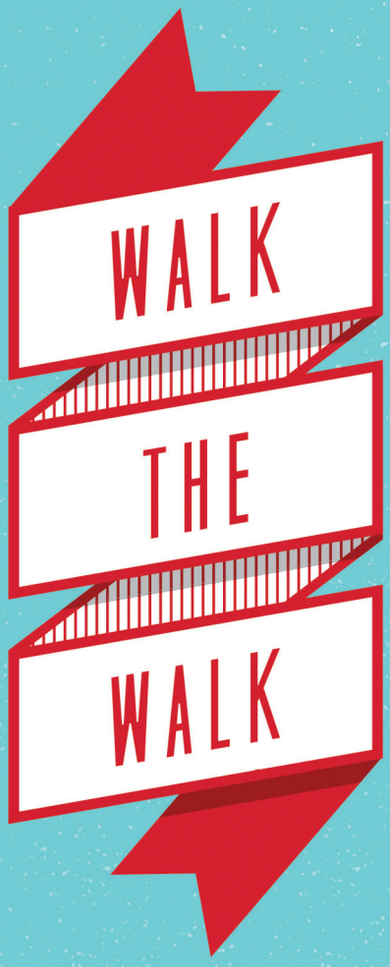
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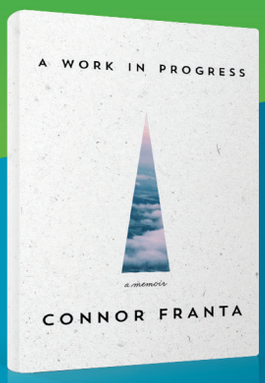
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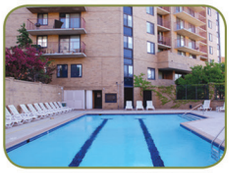


















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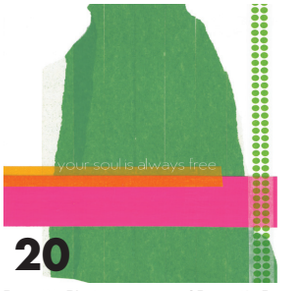
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ON THE COVER

Blake McCoy, Sven Sundgaard, and Rena Sarigianopoulos want you to "Dine Out, Fight AIDS" at Dining Out for Life for The Aliveness Project. Photo by Mike Hnida

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FROM THE EDITOR | BY ANDY LIEN

Ambassadors for Life

Earlier in my career, I was director of development for an organization that raised funds for orphanages. I learned a great many things, not the least of which is that face-to-face marketing is the most effective form of fundraising. When our donors met other donors and heard their stories of being involved with our organization, connections were made and hearts (and wallets) were opened. When our donors met the kids they were supporting, there opened the floodgates. People matter, stories matter, experiences matter.

So it happens with the fundraiser, Dining Out for Life, that is held across the country each year, raising funds for organizations that provide support services for people who are living with HIV/AIDS. Here in the Twin Cities, Dining Out for Life raises funds for The Aliveness Project in Minneapolis. And, from my stance as a fundraiser in a former life, it's a dream event with multiple points of face-to-face marketing, education, branding, and impact.

How it works is that restaurants in the area sign up to participate in the Dining Out for Life event, agreeing to donate a certain percentage of the night's dollars to the organization. So, the diners will advertently or inadvertently be giving money simply by dining out that night. Then, there are also Ambassadors at each participating restaurant who are there to answer questions, represent The Aliveness Project, and ask for additional funds.

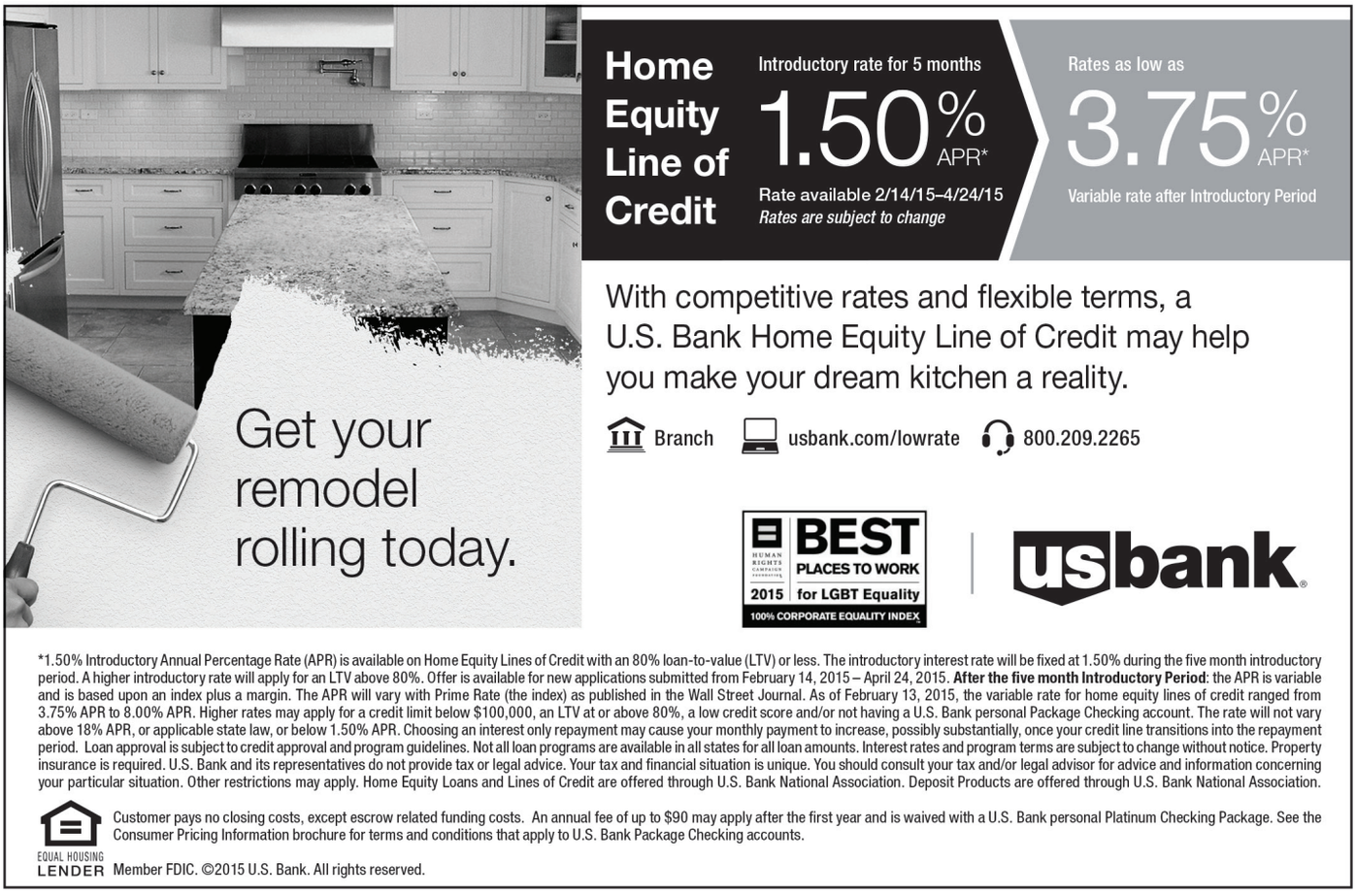
Many volunteers participate at every level. There are so many wonderful fundraisers out there — like galas, dinners, bake sales, cookie sales, rides, walks, and online campaigns with incentives. Each of those involve some form of communicating, but this night out at restaurants includes a large number of people — restaurateurs, chefs, front-of-house staff, and volunteers for The Aliveness Project — acting as ambassadors, communicating in-person, with the very real interaction of educating people who aren't familiar with the event, the organization, or the topic, as well as asking them for funds, formally and informally.

In past years, I've lauded the restaurants for doing some "heavy lifting" in terms of donations, but this year, I'd like to laud the Ambassadors. They are the people who are in each DOL location, whether for breakfast, lunch, or dinner (or multiple times and places) who interface with the guests at each restaurant. They bridge the spaces between the restaurant and the organization, as well as between the donors and the organization, and they do it beautifully.

There are restaurants where it seems like a big party and the Ambassador is there to funnel the goodwill and funds: everyone knows what night it is, everyone knows about Dining Out for Life and where the money goes, and everyone is digging deep and giving money to do more good. Then there are restaurants where the ambassador is in a location that is new to the event and there is a learning curve when talking to diners who are new to raising funds for an AIDS/HIV organization during their meal and may require education or might even give a little push-back to the whole situation. Having been an Ambassador for four or five years before I started this job, I experienced all sorts of scenarios, and each year left me feeling ultimately tired and happy for the challenge the fundraiser presented. I salute the Ambassadors for being out there, trying to field whatever comes their way, with a smile and a hope that the whole town is painted red by people who "Dine Out, Fight AIDS."

With thanks (and wearing my "I ATE" sticker),

Andy ■



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A WORD IN EDGEWISE | BY E.B. BOATNER

Slouching Towards Theocracy: House Bill 1125

Everyone wants religious freedom — at least for one's own faith. The Pilgrims fled England for the Netherlands seeking it, for even in the early seventeenth century Amsterdam was known as a city of culture and religious tolerance.

Too much so for leader William Bradford who found "many of their children, by these occasions, and the great licentiousness of youth in that country and the manifold temptations of the place, were drawn away by evil examples into extravagant and dangerous courses."

Packing his followers aboard the *Mayflower*, Bradford landed here in 1620. Religious freedom? In 1660, Mary Dyer was hanged on the Boston Common for her Quaker faith. As the United States came into being, founders drafted documents protecting the citizens' right to worship, stipulating freedom of and from religion, and separation of church and state.

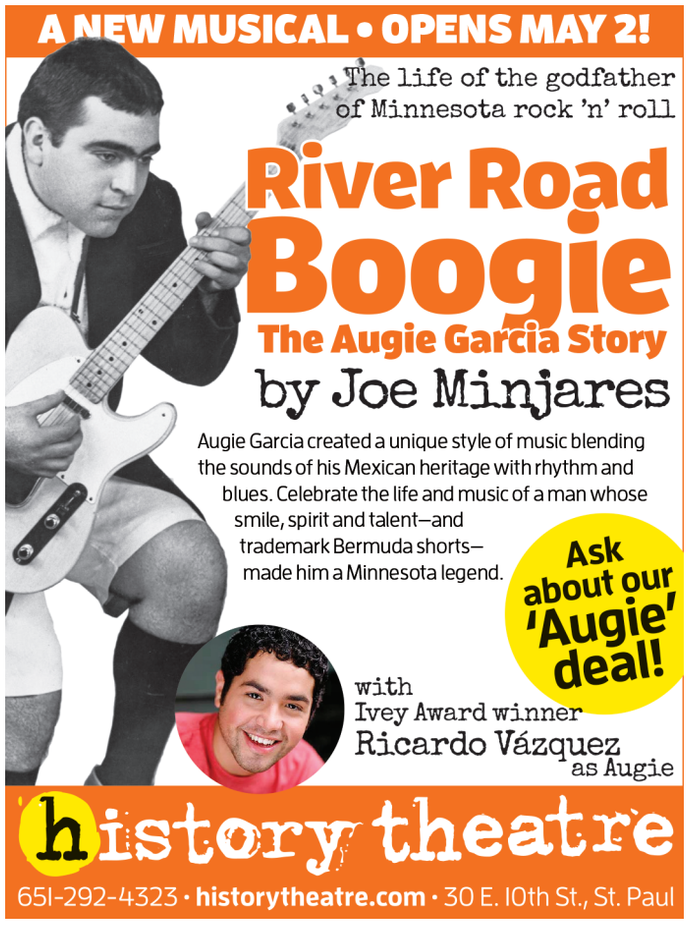
Today many hunger for a theocracy, limiting others' religious freedom, trampling the civil rights of women, people of color, non-theists, and GLBT citizens. Oklahoma State Representative Todd Russ says House Bill 1125 will "take the state out of the process and leave marriage in the hands of the clergy," adding, "Under my bill, the state is not allowing or disallowing same-sex marriage. It is simply leaving it up to the clergy." However, the bill limits marriage to "people of faith."

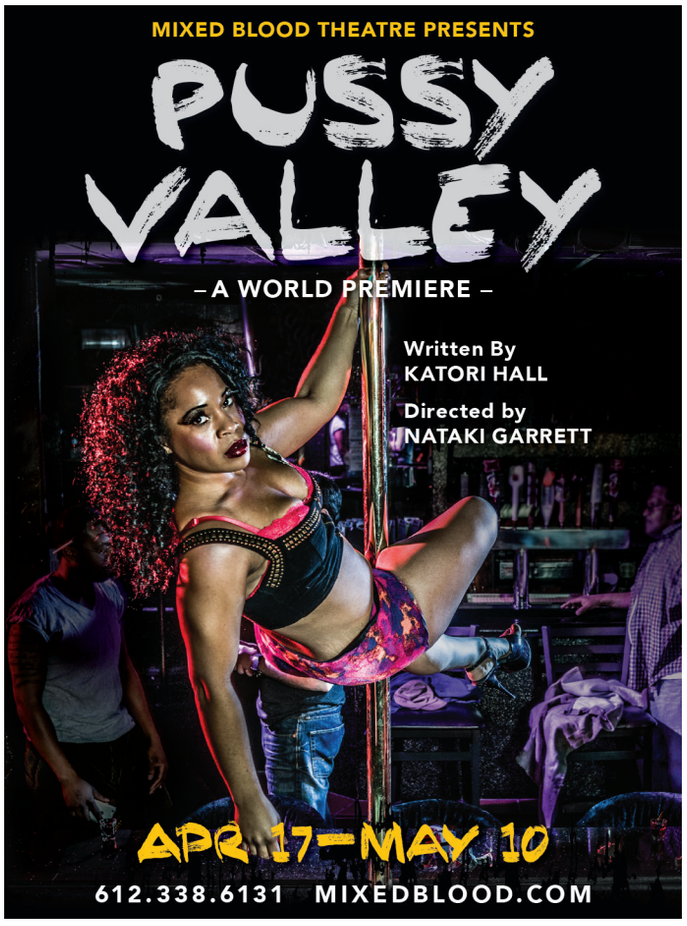
State employees won't have to issue marriage licenses to same-sex couples and atheists are rendered second-class. Russ says of them: "They don't have a spiritual basis for a marriage and don't want to have a clergy member or a priest or someone involved in the spiritual aspect, then they can file an affidavit of common-law marriage."

But as happens in hasty, ill-considered moves, there are loopholes and finagles. "Clergy?" Corporate trainer Paula Scheider of Tulsa was ordained by the Church of the Latter-Day Dude (inspired by *The Big Lebowski*) and has to date performed eight marriages. And there exist many gay clergy, even, I would hazard, in Oklahoma.

Just one example of many ludicrous attempts mushrooming throughout the country, all fuelled by fearful, hate-filled, power-hungry instigators. (Check also California attorney Matt McLaughlin; he paid $200 to submit his ballot initiative, "Sodomite Suppression Act," proposing to kill all gays.)

Ludicrous, yes, but dangerous, and they cannot be dismissed. ■





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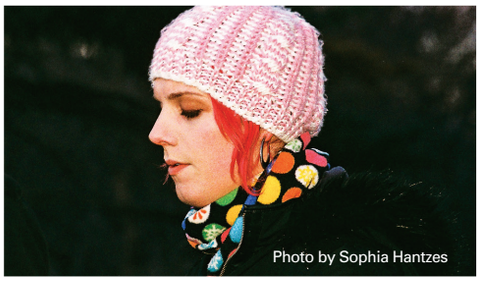


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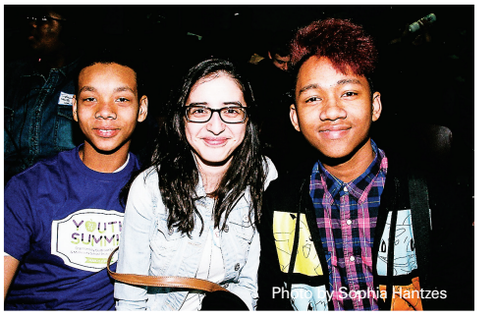






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BY BARRY LEAVITT

2ND ANNUAL FLAMINGO YARD PARTY

April 18 • 6–10 p.m.
LUSH • 990 Central Ave. NE, Minneapolis

Join the Flamingos Softball Team for its 2nd Annual Yard Party bar fundraiser! $10 beer bust and special shots! The team with the most attending players will receive a lovely parting gift! Come out and have some fun with the Flamingos before the season gets started! Search "2nd Annual Flamingo Yard Party" on Facebook for more info.

GAY FOR GOOD TWIN CITIES EARTH DAY CLEANUP

April 25 • 9:30 a.m.–Noon
Fairview Park
621 29th Ave. N., Minneapolis

This is the very first volunteer service event for the newest chapter of Gay For Good - Twin Cities. Come enjoy a wonderful morning of service, and afterwards, join them for a late brunch at Mattie's on Main to get to know your fellow volunteers better. All you need to bring is a pair of gloves that fit you well. Bags and other equipment will be provided. Earth Day Cleanup is held at several sites throughout the City of Minneapolis. Search "Gay For Good Twin Cities Earth Day Cleanup" on Facebook for more info.

WILD WEST BINGO

May 16 • Doors: 5:30 p.m. • Games: 7 p.m. sharp
Hyatt Regency
1300 Nicollet Mall, Minneapolis

Hey Buckaroos! Grab your chaps and Stetson and saddle up for Wild West Bingo! The fabulous Miss Richfield 1981 and her closest friends host the hoedown that supports Park House, an HIV/AIDS day facility, and the Twin Cities Gay Men's Chorus. Y'all can enjoy live bingo games for prizes including the $1,000 Big Game, awesome raffle packages, tasty food offerings, cash bar, a Wild West costume contest, and Take-A-Chance Mystery Prize game. Purchase tickets at www.bingoagogo.com until noon on Friday, May 15 for $35; or pay $45 at the door (while seats last). Tables of eight or more get reserved seating when you specify a table host when ordering online. Tickets are also available by calling the Bingo Hotline at (612) 863-7168, or by visiting Rainbow Road or Fiant Dental (while supplies last). Visit www.bingoagogo.com for more info. ■

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FREE INITIAL CONSULTATION

LAVENDER's
Nights at the Theater

Disney and CAMERON MACKINTOSH'S
MARY POPPINS
THE BROADWAY MUSICAL



Thursday, May 14
7:00pm
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LAVENDER's
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Show starts at 8:00

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ChanhassenDT.com



Fifty Shades of Gravy. Photo by Dani Werner

DETROIT '67

Apr. 23 – May 17
Penumbra Theatre, 270 N. Kent St., St. Paul
(651) 224-3180
www.penumbratheatre.org

Penumbra's *Womansong* series continues with *Detroit '67*, the Edward M. Kennedy Prize-winner for Drama by Dominique Morisseau. The division between police forces and law-abiding black folks is at the core of the play's conflict. Two siblings portrayed by Darius Dotch and Austene Van provide a safe space for a badly beaten white woman. The siblings, Lank and Chelle, are also affected by police snooping over basement parties where they spin the latest Motown tunes. Morisseau's drama resonates with today's concerns over racism among U.S. police forces and renewed interest in the Motown sound.

DOWN BELOW, OR THE WOMB OF THE WORLDS: A SHADOW OPERA

Through Apr. 26
Bedlam Lowertown, 213 E. 4th St., St Paul
www.bedlamtheatre.org

Shadow puppetry, projections, and narration in the spirit of surrealism flow through this performance about the life and work of painter Leonora Carrington, described as a British-born Mexican. The piece is accompanied by the band, Spires That In The Sunrise Set. Co-creator Erik Ruin says, "We're aiming to create a truly haunting and immersive experience, the likes of which is rarely had outside of dreams."

FIFTY SHADES OF GRAVY

Through May 2
Brave New Workshop
824 Hennepin Ave., Mpls.
(612) 332-6620
www.bravenewworkshop.com

With *Fifty Shades of Gravy* the Brave New Workshop establishes itself as a brilliantly and bluntly honest satirist of issues related to race, gender, and gender-bending. The novel and film, *Fifty Shades of Grey*, both created by women (E.L. James and Sam Taylor-Johnson, respectively) is more of a springboard for other issues to come up. And that's good, because let's face it, the obligatory need to trash James and Taylor-Johnson's work gets old and it's too easy.

But what Caleb McEwen's collaborating cast has shaped is a scathing look at hypocrisy of institutions and people. And it's not the easy dig that too many comic types take and get cheap laughs from. For instance, Fox News' predictably ridiculous programming is juxtaposed with ridiculously pretentious programming by NPR. The hostility expressed by those who too readily take offense over those who don't respond to their gender presentation is bravely critiqued and much needed. And a scene between a white woman on a date with a black man percolates with ingenious table-turning. Both sides of the aisle are confronted. This is show is a "must see!"

THE HABSBURGS

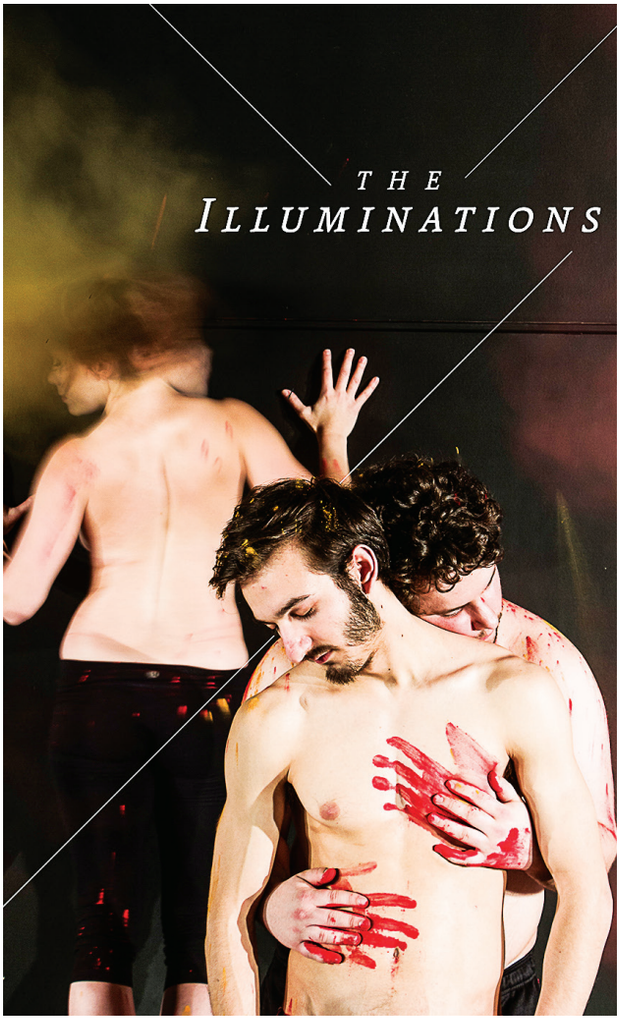
Through May 10
Minneapolis Institute of Arts,
2400 Third Ave. S., Mpls.
(612) 870-3131
www.artsmia.org

Minneapolis Institute of Arts transports us to the Habsburg Empire which your great or great-great grandparents would have

remembered as a major world power in the same way we see China, India, Russia, or the U.S. today. From the Middle Ages to its collapse in World War I, the Habsburgs were committed to Rome and Catholicism. They were a hybrid of countries of Eastern and Western Europe, united in part by incestuous marriages and great wealth. Some of its monarchs we are more familiar with are the inept Ludwig and the effective Maria Theresa.

The exhibit is one glorious mixture of art and decorative practical works meant to intimidate and impress the impoverished masses, such as gorgeous saddlery and a coach to make Cinderella's stepmother salivate. Boldly dark eroticism emanates from Corregio's almost half-a-millennia old *Jupiter and Io* where the chief god comes through the mist with a paw ready to sweep the naked woman away.

However, prepare to be jolted, whether you are a Christian or not, at gay master painter Caravaggio's *The Crowning of Thorns*. The horrific cruelty of Jesus's crucifixion is conveyed with disturbing intimacy. It shows heartbreaking empathy for the tortured Christ and the Habsburg's fidelity to the Holy Roman Catholic Church. These are only a few pieces in what is a truly breathtaking installation.



The Illuninations. Photo courtesy of Galen Higgins



The Reagan Years. Photo by Heidi Bohnenkamp

THE ILLUMINATIONS

May 7 – 9
Southern Theater
1420 S. Washington Ave., Mpls.
(612) 343-3390
www.southerntheatre.org

Celebrated choreographer Scott Rink remembers two major figures of gay and bisexual literary history. In *The Illuminations* he has adapted writings of Arthur Rimbaud and Paul Verlaine into a dance performance with music by Claude Debussy and Benjamin Britten. Rink shares, "I found this material compelling as a relationship between artists and that it was archived in poems, letters, and transcripts. I had been in a relationship with another artist in my field when I began work on the adaptation and recognized similarities." Rink recently choreographed a chilling piece involving oppression of queer people in contemporary Russia for the University of Minnesota Dance Theatre.

THE REAGAN YEARS

Through May 2
Playwrights Center
2301 E. Franklin Ave., Mpls.
(800) 838-3006
www.wokhauscollective.org

Four college buddies heavily into partying in the 1980s forward the action of this thriller from Workhaus Collective. What appears to be an accident at one of the pals' wealthy father's company seeps into their hedonistic world. Playwright Dominic Orlando comments, "The play is specifically about how the President's mentality, and the cultural shift in the 1980s 'trickled down' to the young men growing up at the time, especially privileged men, since Reagan was pretty open about who he was talking to. It's expressed as a black comic thriller, but thematically, as playwright Carson Kreitzer put it when she came to the read-through, it's 'a searing indictment.'" ■

ARTS & CULTURE | BY SHANE LUECK

METRO ARTS TOURS:
FEATURING THE BEST LOCAL TALENT



Artwork by Angela Hed Vincent.

The days are longer and warmer, it's time to make your plans to get out and experience some of the best visual art our local scene has to offer. Explore some of our upcoming crawls and tours as well as get to know some of the artists who identify as part of our community.

SAINT PAUL ART CRAWL
April 24–26
St. Paul
www.stpaulartcrawl.org

The St. Paul Art Collective (SPAC) brings the Saint Paul Art Crawl back once more for spring 2015. Since 1977, SPAC has empowered artists in St. Paul by expanding connections and protecting inspirational spaces for artists to create and grow. Recognizing that art is essential for a healthy and vibrant community, SPAC runs and supports projects, initiatives, and events that increase the awareness of its artists, their work, and the crucial role they play in the greater cultural life of the Twin Cities. The Saint Paul Art Crawl has been the Collective's cornerstone event for over twenty years, with the number of participating artists now exceeding 300 and the number of visitors averaging around 20,000 for each semi-annual, three-day event. Recognized for its tremendous success, the Saint Paul Art Crawl has become a model arts event that is emulated in cities across the country. The Art Crawl has evolved from a fun weekend art event, to a framework for creating and fostering important, interdependent relationships between the arts community and the city itself.

FEATURED ARTIST: ANGELA HED VINCENT
www.thestudioproject.org

With a medium of intention-based art (meaning that the work begins with an intention), Angela's medium is, to a large extent, dictated by that intent. Recently, paper has been an integral part her work. Her passion for art began when she was four, when her grandmother taught her how to embroider. "For as long as I can remember I've wanted to create things with my hands," she says. "I now have a master's degree in sculpture and find myself binding books nearly every day, remembering my grandma as I stitch." Look for her bound journals, Joy Page prints, and pottery at the Saint Paul Art Crawl.

FEATURED ARTIST: GERALYN THELEN
www.justmegeralynandglass.com

Some might recognize this artist's work from Just Me Geralyn and Glass. Geralyn is a fused glass artist, which means she makes kiln-fired glass, a process through which she creates one piece from various pieces of glass before firing the art in the kiln anywhere from 15 to 30 hours. It all began eight years ago when a friend asked her to take a class in fused glass. Being someone who is always looking for a new adventure, she agreed. "That one class changed my life," she says. "I started out making small glass pendants. Then I morphed into making plates and my pieces just kept getting bigger and bigger." This year Geralyn completed a 72-inch high sculpture of four sunflowers.

FEATURED ARTIST: BILL HOSKO

www.billhosko.com

"My kindergarten teacher wrote on a report card once, 'Billy should be an artist when he grows up,'" he says. "That was in 1968, and I am still not fully grown up!" The artist, who works in pen and ink, watercolor, and oil paint, opened his own downtown St. Paul gallery in early 1994. Finding inspiration in everything, a lot of his work features architecture: commercial, residential, public places and parks, and city skylines, with Chicago remaining his world-favorite. His artwork featured in the Saint Paul Art Crawl captures some of the most iconic scenes and buildings in St. Paul.

FEATURED ARTIST: TOM REYNEN

www.redbubble.com/people/tommyrey

Many photographers get their start by taking photos while traveling and the same goes for Tom. But the advent of digital cameras changed things completely for him. He could easily fix photos on the computer and try all sorts of creative effects. His passion for travel and nature carries through his photography. "I love capturing details, whether in a flower or in the architecture of a building," he says. "I also love working with various types of photo software and people have hired me to fix their vacation or personal photos or turn them into a work of art." Art Crawl attendees can expect to see his photography in two different locations, featuring landscape photos at the AZ Gallery and vegetable photos at the Dow Gallery.







Artwork by (clockwise from top left): Geralyn Thelen; Bill Hosko; Tom Reynen.

LAKE MINNETONKA STUDIO TOUR

May 2–3

Lake Minnetonka Area

www.LakeMtka-StudioTour.com

Continuing a tradition for over eight years, a group of 28 artists around Lake Minnetonka will be opening their home studios to the public this May. During the Lake Minnetonka Studio Tour visitors will discover a variety of styles and mediums including painting, ceramics, fiber, jewelry, wood, glass, and more. It is a perfect time of year for people to enjoy a springtime drive, to discover inspiring and beautiful art, and to see first-hand the studios where artists create. Find a unique gift for Mother's Day, or a new work of art to enhance the home, buying directly from the artist who created the work. An open studio format is a great opportunity for artists to share their creative passion with the community in an atmosphere that is inviting and informative. Artists will be happy to answer questions about their work and the creative process. They look forward to welcoming art-lovers throughout the weekend of the tour.

ART-A-WHIRL

May 15–17

Northeast Minneapolis

www.nemaa.org/art-a-whirl

Presented by the Northeast Minneapolis Arts Association (NEMAA), Art-A-Whirl is an open studio tour in Northeast Minneapolis. It's a great opportunity to tour private artist studios and galleries, connect with the artists, and purchase original artwork. During Art-A-Whirl, private art studios, galleries, homes, storefronts, businesses, and restaurants have artwork on display and are open to the public, creating a fun atmosphere to connect

CONTINUED ON PAGE 22



Artwork by Mark Davison.

with artists and purchase original artwork. The focus of the event is to promote the artists and art of Northeast Minneapolis. Over the last 20 years, it has become the largest open studio tour in the country. See the work of more than 500 artists in more than 20 mediums including clay, furniture, glass, painting, photography, printmaking, sculpture, and much more. The artists' open studio tours may include demonstrations, live performances, and large-scale exhibitions. Studio tours offer a great opportunity to ask questions, discuss techniques, experience art first-hand, and purchase unique artwork directly from the artists.

FEATURED ARTIST: MARK DAVISON

www.mnartists.org/monkey-king-ceramics

Sculptor Mark Davison walks with an arm crutch due to being on the first AZT trials back in the '80s, causing him to get very sick at the time, but is much healthier now with new medications. His friends wanted to give him a productive outlet so they chipped in and bought him a pottery class for his 40th birthday. He's been working with clay ever since. Death, religion, and sexuality all play big parts in his work, but he produces a wide variety of sculptures. "When I'm making art I don't usually start with the end in mind," he says. "The clay becomes a receptacle for what I'm feeling at the time, whether that's pain, sadness, or joy. As each piece emerges, it develops a life of its own. Because of this, you won't see much duplication in my work; each piece has my particular quirky touch."

FRESH ART SPRING TOUR

June 5–7
Lake Pepin and Chippewa River Valley, Wisconsin
www.freshart.org

Wisconsinites burst out in spring every bit as much as the wildflowers. The Fresh Art Spring Tour gives you the opportunity to have an art adventure in one of nature's remaining unspoiled regions: the area between the rivers, the villages of Pepin, Stockholm, and southern Pierce County. The homes, studios, and galleries, some formerly old farms and their out-buildings, have been made into spaces of beauty. The gardens are blooming and charming, as some of these artists are master gardeners as well. The artists in Pepin and southern Pierce Counties have a big presence. It's the usual story: the country farmsteads were cheap. Artists moved here in the '70s, with a "back to the land" intention. It's like a lot of areas where artists move in, they open little shops as a way to make a semblance of a living…add a good restaurant or two, and eventually the towns become a destination. Traveling along the river and into the countryside you will discover the scenic winding roads and, every once in a while, the talented artists and craftspeople on the tour. ■





MADONNA *Rebel Heart*

Quoting your own music is always a dangerous game for an artist, and Madonna goes down that path on "Holy Water," a typical button-pusher of a tune that, midway through, features parts of the "Vogue" rap from two decades ago. By the end, I just wanted to listen to "Vogue." *Rebel Heart* feels like that a lot — an artist trying to recapture the past without making any real inroads. Sure, there's attitude (the rough "Bitch, I'm Madonna"; though the attitude is ruined by a guest spot by Nicki Minaj). "S.E.X." wants to be a 21st century "Justify My Love," but without the ahead-of-its-time sonics. Some of the best moments come from the other guests, who include Chance the Rapper and Nas (speaking of the '90s).



COURTNEY BARNETT *Sometimes I Sit and Think, and Sometimes I Just Sit*

I've been pretty skeptical of this young Australian singer-songwriter, as I've often felt her lyrics trying so hard to be clever that they came off as trite. There's still some of that on her debut full-length (last year's U.S. release jammed two EPs together in one package), but there's also much more assured singing and playing that helps to smooth over those feelings. The songs often twist and turn in unexpected ways, like the fiery blues of "Small Poppies" or the 1970s punk vibe of "Aqua Profunda!" Beyond that, there is Barnett's rough and angular guitar playing. The jangling solo at the end of "Small Poppies" would make Angus Young proud. So much so that I can forgive the oh-so-twee wordplay in the debut single "Pedestrian at Best."



FATHER JOHN MISTY *I Love You, Honeybear*

The good Father (stage name of Joshua Tillman) makes good on the promise of earlier solo albums with a terrific set of tunes. Like an American Elvis Costello, Tillman crafts songs that are clever, sharp, brutal, and angry. All of that is often directed right at the singer-songwriter himself, as he carefully describes his faults throughout the album, like on the searing "An Ideal Husband." Then there's "The Night Josh Tillman Came to Our Apartment," which hides a vicious set of lyrics behind a pretty country tune. Targets a bit outside of himself are here as well, as in the long-reach of "Bored in the U.S.A.," where the songwriter's ennui easily can be applied to all of us who are in search of satisfaction in a consumerism-saturated America.



TAGGART AND ROSEWOOD *The Killingest*

Out of the ashes of sexy supergroup Gayngs comes Taggart and Rosewood, the brainchild of Solid Gold's Zach Coulter and Ryan Olson of Poliça. What they've produced is music that exists between late night funk jams and even later-night ambient chill-outs. It's music for the moments immediately after sex when the participants are on cloud nine, and about to drift off to sleep. That vibe begins to build on album opener, "Came and You Saw," as the chilled-out musical vibe is matched with breathless vocals. Most of the tunes were crafted at a slow, 55-beats-per-minute pace. By album closer "You and I" even the beats are gone, and we're left with a sonic piece that makes a perfect lead in for a nap. ■



2015 NEW RESTAURANT GUIDE & PREVIEW

Joy Summers is the go-to for what's new and to be known on the Twin Cities' restaurant scene. Here she's culminated a list of eateries for you to put on your radar, some of what's developed in the last year as well as what we have to look forward to opening sooner than later.

6 SMITH

First of all, I dare you to find a better view than the one from the 6 Smith patio. Second, the extensive menu and fantastic drink list make it hard to want to eat anywhere else on a warm day. Follow their Facebook feed for the Fat Pants Friday specials. These decadent offerings shouldn't even be gazed upon without an elastic waistline.
294 E. Grove Ln., Wayzata
www.6smith.com

AGRA CULTURE KITCHEN & PRESS

This emerging chain proves that eating healthfully doesn't have to be boring.
3717 W. 50th St., Minneapolis
2939 Girard Ave. S., Minneapolis
Minneapolis Institute of Arts at 2400 3rd Ave. S., Minneapolis
www.agra-culture.com.

BETTY DANGER'S COUNTRY CLUB

Finally, a country club for the rest of us! This is the stuff twisted plaid dreams are made of, with a dedication to kitsch that could only come from the same team that gave us Psycho Suzi's. This summer the revolving patio (that looks suspiciously like an enormous ferris wheel) will be the spot for an outdoor cocktail. Speaking of cocktails, the margaritas are not to be missed and they have a boozy slushy machine! The cuisine is described as "Mexi-Hampton" which means no shortage of fried flour tortillas or spice.
2519 Marshall St., Minneapolis
www.bettydangers.com

BIRCHWOOD CAFE

The new Birchwood Cafe is much like the old one in soul. They remain great champions of local farms and the community, there is just way more room for the cooking. The new dining room is more comfortable, but the chef's ability to spread his wings makes for even tastier food (if that's even possible). I'd still hang my hat on this being the best turkey burger in town, too.
3311 E. 25th St., Minneapolis
www.birchwoodcafe.com

* BIRCHWOOD CAFÉ





Photos by Katie Cannon

* BETTY DANGER'S COUNTRY CLUB



Photo courtesy of Betty Danger's Country Club







Photos courtesy of Bogart's Doughnut Co.

*
BOGART'S DOUGHNUT CO.

BOGART'S DOUGHNUT CO.

Who doesn't love a donut? These fried wonders have grown up from a stand at the Kingfield farmers market to the one-handed treat that had opening crowds lining up early every day to raid. The crowds have calmed down (no more waiting for your donut), but the creative flavors and beautifully executed classics are still worth getting up early to eat.
904 W. 36th St., Minneapolis
www.bogartsdoughnutco.com

BRASSERIE ZENTRAL

This might just be the best new spot for a business lunch in downtown Minneapolis (it definitely is in this part of town). The speck spaghetti is nothing short of a plate of perfect comfort food — so mind-bogglingly simple that it's just stupid good. The schnitzel is a savory balance of crispy, juicy, crunchy, and salty. Cocktails are sophisticated and the wine list is enough to work oenophiles up into a froth. The happy hour and dinner menus are just as elegantly satisfying.
505 Marquette Ave. S. Minneapolis
www.zentral-mpls.com

CAFE RACER

Did you know that Colombian-style hot dogs include crumbled up potato chips as a topping? Discover this and other useful bits of food trivia by winding your way through the new menu at Cafe Racer. Try the carrot soufflé and see what I mean.
2929 E. 25th St., Minneapolis
www.caferacermn.com

COOK ST. PAUL

Who knew what the average American diner was lacking was a dose of Korean flavor? This east side breakfast and lunch spot has the hunger-banishing classics like crispy hash browns and gloriously meaty bacon. But they also have dishes augmented with the pickly fire known as kimchi. The Korean rice bowl with slow-braised short ribs has already garnered a near-religious following. Baked goods like the mammoth cinnamon roll are made from scratch (by owner Eddie Wu's wildly talented wife). Speaking of Eddie, order his eponymous drink: the Eddie Wu is a combination of Gray Duck Chai and lemonade that's kicky and refreshing.
1124 Payne Ave., St. Paul
www.cookstp.com

Photos by Eliza Johnson



*
COOK ST. PAUL



2015 NEW RESTAURANT GUIDE & PREVIEW

HALF TIME REC
ST. PAUL, MN

FOREIGN LEGION

This sleek wine bar has fast become a go-to happy hour and date night destination. The wine list is just astounding and the way that you can order (by the sip, carafe, or bottle) allows a curious drinker to sample a wide selection of varieties or fall in love with a new favorite. The food menu is modest, but great for noshing and grazing with gorgeous cured meats and a funky, fantastic cheese selection.
105 S. 5th St., Minneapolis
www.foreignlegion-mpls.com

HALF TIME REC – PADDY SHACK

For a fine dining chef, Jack Riebel certainly does well with bar food. The new Paddy Shack inside Half Time Rec is better than your average dive bar menu. The corned beef and cabbage topped chips (fat french fries to us Yanks) is the kind of dish you'll dream about long after they're gone. The mammoth burger and snappy hot dogs are also divine. There isn't much not to love about this new menu.
1013 Front Ave., St. Paul
www.paddy-shack.com

HOLA AREPA

For some, their love is like a red, red rose. For me, it's more like a crispy, tender arepa stuffed with anything Christina Nguyen deems fit to cook. From the tropical, breezy room to the wonderful patio to the friendly service, I cannot get enough of this place. The cocktail program is second to none and I haven't even mentioned that this is the brunch service that packs the eaters in on weekends. If this restaurant was a person, I'd marry it and live the rest of my days in a sunny, happiness haze.
3501 Nicollet Ave., Minneapolis
www.holaarepa.com

HEYDAY

Located on Lyndale Avenue in the space previously occupied by Sunnyside Up Café and a laundromat, Heyday was created by culinary powerhouse restauranteurs Jim Christiansen and Lorin Zinter.
"We thought we were opening a really good restaurant," explains Zinter. "But the feedback we've gotten from our peers in the food community has been really overwhelming and humbling. We've had chefs, sous chefs and general managers coming in and raving about the food and the space. It makes us feel really wonderful."
Christiansen admits the hardest question he keeps fielding is about the style of food. "I like the description of a Minneapolis bistro," he says. "There's definitely a French influence, but even more so a casualness to the restaurant. And that I hope translates to the food as well. Great quality ingredients with some fun put into it."
—by Pat Evans, "Taste Buds with Pat Evans," Issue 498


OUR SCENE
TASTE BUDS WITH PAT EVANS | PHOTOS BY HUBERT BONNET
Heyday
FOR FOODIES AND THE NEIGHBORHOOD

* HEYDAY

* HOT INDIAN FOODS

Photo courtesy of Bite Squad

HOT INDIAN FOODS

One of the most consistent complaints I've heard about the ethnic food options in Minneapolis is that there just isn't enough good Indian food. Well, get yourself on down to Midtown Global Market and feast upon these heavenly spiced dishes served street-style. Everything is easy to grab and eat quickly, but you'd be wise to savor these layers of seasonings.
920 E. Lake St., Midtown Global Market, Minneapolis
www.hotindianfoods.com



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Kudos to Linda Raines for compiling the top 5 daily stories!

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Twin Cities Gay Men's Chorus

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XV Songs from the Heart

Twin Cities Gay Men's Chorus celebrates the crystal anniversary – fifteen years of our Songs from the Heart gala! It's our biggest fundraiser of the year and we want you to shine with us!

Your participation helps TCGMC fulfill its mission of **gay men building community through music** and support its beneficiary, Clare Housing. **Join us for an exciting night of song, delicious dishes, spirited silent and live auctions: all benefiting two celebrated Twin Cities organizations.**

Festivities include

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Jason Matheson
Master of Ceremonies, FOX 9



Mike Augustyniak
Master of Ceremonies, WCCO 4

What TCGMC's Annual Fundraiser benefiting TCGMC and Clare Housing

When Saturday, May 9, 2015 at 6pm

Where The Metropolitan Ballroom & Clubroom
5418 Wayzata Boulevard, Golden Valley, MN 55416



Karen Sorbo
Auctioneer



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2015
NEW RESTAURANT GUIDE
& PREVIEW

*
KYATCHI



Photo by Cameron Wittig

KYATCHI
Kyatchi led the charge to revitalizing this corner of South Minneapolis (Five Watt Coffee and the soon-to-open-Nighthawks have followed). Dishes include sushi, sashimi, brothy bowls of ramen, and some ballpark-inspired hot dogs.
3758 Nicollet Ave., Minneapolis
www.kyatchi.com

LA FRESCA
This diminutive cozy spot quickly became a neighborhood destination in this already-rich restaurant area. Experts know to start every meal with an order of the perfect guacamole. Avocados dream of growing up to be mashed inside this kitchen.
4750 Grand Ave. S., Minneapolis
www.lafrescampls.com

LAGO TACOS
Where Uptown used to seem to be obsessed with Thai food, the dish of the moment is now tacos. With a pack of margaritas and a patio that invites guests to settle in for a good, long afternoon, this taco spot is a welcome addition to the 55408.
30 Water St., Excelsior and 2901 Lyndale Ave, S., Minneapolis
www.lagotacos.com

*
LA FRESCA



Photo by Hubert Bonnet



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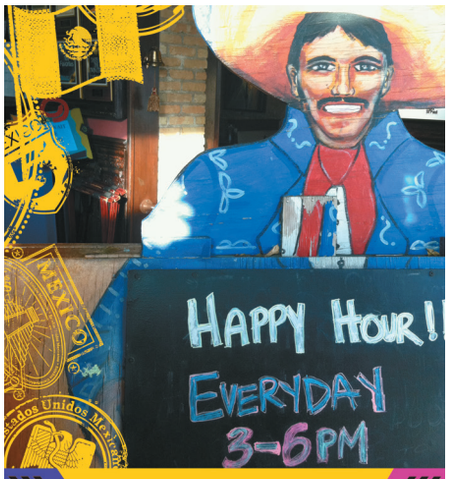


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2015
NEW RESTAURANT GUIDE
& PREVIEW



Photo courtesy of Le Town Talk Diner & Drinkery

LYN 65 KITCHEN AND BAR

Ben Rients, Jason Sawicki, and Travis Serbus are not above spending over 24 hours straight inside their new restaurant that's drawing food fans to Richfield. Since the opening of Lyn 65, fans have gushed about the cocktails, praised the food, and proved they're willing to wait in line and sample whatever the team deems worthy to serve them.

Rients and Sawicki met while working the line at Restaurant Alma. The restaurant is widely regarded as one of the best in Minneapolis. Chef and owner Alex Roberts has received numerous accolades including the prestigious James Beard Award for Best Chef Midwest. It was inside Alma's kitchen where the two young chefs honed their appreciation for sourcing the best ingredients available and preparing them in ways that accentuate the flavors. This is where the dream was hatched. It was with the blessing of the entire restaurant crew and some unpaid consulting help from Chef Roberts that the duo began to piece together the rough idea that would become an independent restaurant with a tasting menu, well-chosen wine list, Neapolitan-style pizzas, and bar food.

—by Joy Summers, Issue 506



Photo courtesy of Libertine

LE TOWN TALK DINER & DRINKERY

This historic diner has been all dressed up with a chic French flair. The food is French comfort food, not too fancy, but miles above greasy spoon fare.
2707 E. Lake St., Minneapolis
www.letowntalk.com

LIBERTINE

The latest offering from Tim McKee and Parasole is a meat lovers paradise. Whether you prefer a giant hunk of perfectly seasoned meat or to take a shot of bourbon down a bone liberated from its marrow, they have it covered.
3001 Hennepin Ave., Minneapolis
www.libertinempls.com


OUR SCENE
FOOD & DINING | BY JOY SUMMERS | PHOTOS BY HUBERT BONNET
Lyn 65
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noah wolf

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2015
NEW RESTAURANT GUIDE
& PREVIEW

MATTIE'S ON MAIN

Some new memories are about to be made on the river in Minneapolis. Storied St. Anthony Main is beginning a new chapter by turning back the page to its bawdy past. Restaurateurs Dean Schlaak and Tom DeGree of Wilde Roast Cafe along with longtime friend and business partner Brian Gilligan are embarking on a new culinary adventure.

They've opened Mattie St. Clair's House of Spirits on Main Street, or "Mattie's On Main" for short, in the 5,800 square foot space formerly occupied by Kikugawa. Think modern saloon meets gastropub. And Le Cordon Bleu-trained Executive Chef Adam Icard is eager to meet the challenge. "We didn't just want to have simple bar food like wings," he insists. "Dean wanted to have a gastropub type feel to the menu, so the other 2 chefs and I approached this by deconstructing some familiar things and making them completely different. We even make our own condiments from scratch."

—by Pat Evans, "Taste Buds with Pat Evans," Issue 497







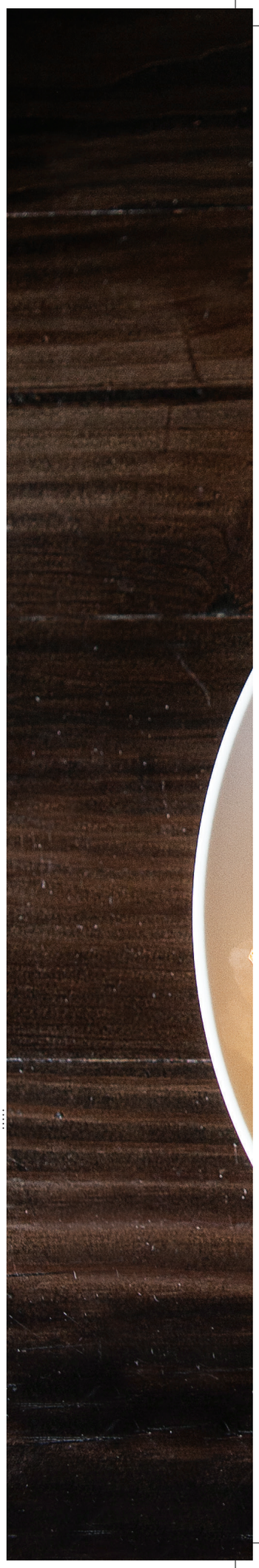


Photo by Hubert Bonnet

MON PETIT CHÉRI BAKERY

Another farmers market stand success story. This one involves freshly baked morning treats, like sticky rolls and scones that have moved inside an adorable little neighborhood café in Seward. The expanded menu also includes savory breakfast and lunch options.

2401 Franklin Ave., Minneapolis

www.mpcbakery.com



PEPPERS AND FRIES

Burgers and burritos star on the menu inside this new Longfellow eatery. It's a gorgeous space to while away the summer days with a burger, a pile of fries, and a cold beer inside this space with the garage door windows rolled back. The peanut butter and spicy jelly-topped burger is the kind of weird you'll want to get to know better.
3900 E. Lake St., Minneapolis
www.peppersandfries.com

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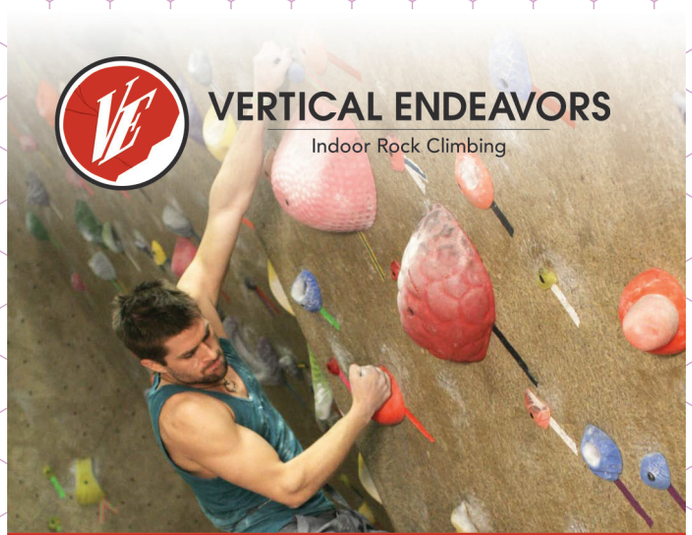


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2015
NEW RESTAURANT GUIDE
& PREVIEW



Photo courtesy of Prairie Dogs

* PRAIRIE DOGS

PRAIRIE DOGS

Now open (and available for neighborhood delivery), this hot dog spot in the former Gray House location might just be the perfect pairing for the neighborhood. Sausages aren't so much made as crafted, packed with flavor and topped with chef-inspired ingredients. It's a great place to hit with the kids or a crowd of friends for a casual night out. Just don't forget to save a little room for dessert. The Sebastian Joe's ice cream malts demand your full attention.
610 W. Lake St., Minneapolis
www.facebook.com/prairiedogs





* PUBLIC KITCHEN + BAR



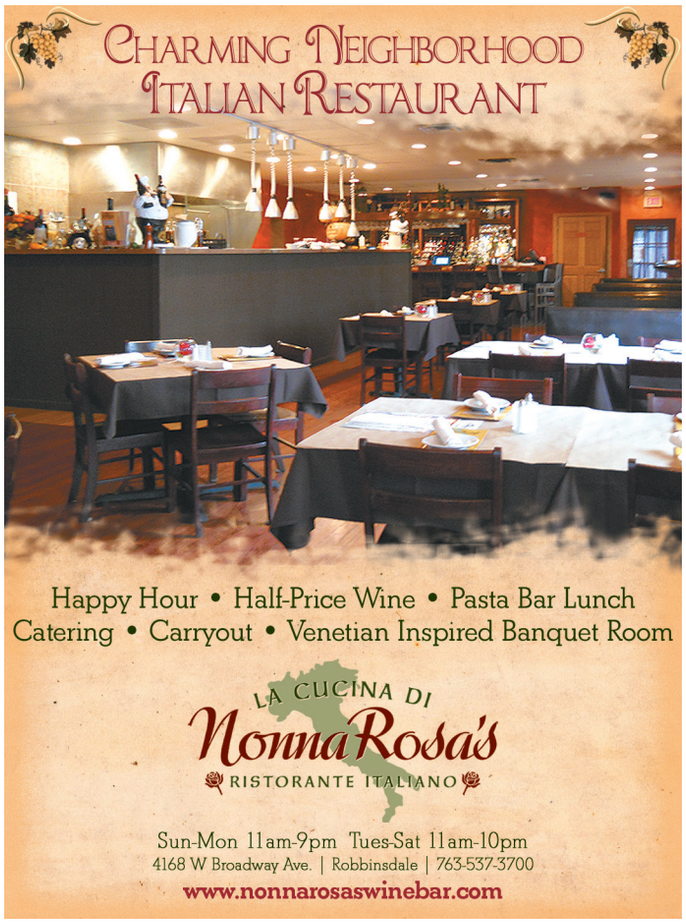


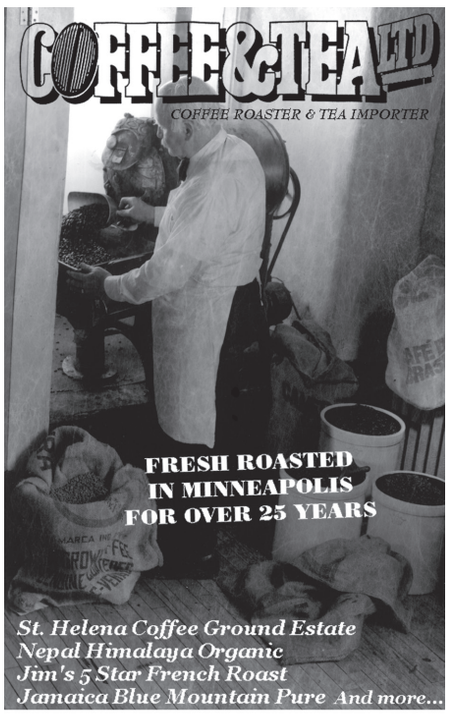
PUBLIC KITCHEN + BAR

It's hard to believe this beautiful room was once a boring office space. It's clear the high ceilings, arched windows, and gleaming wood with rustic touches was waiting to house a restaurant. Dining with a view of nearby Mears Park never gets old. The menu is packed with classic dishes given the Public twist like a classic Caesar salad, pasta, and chicken, with desserts like crème brûlée and (an oddly brown) banana cream pie.
229 E. 6th St., St. Paul
www.publickitchenstpaul.com

Photos courtesy of Public Kitchen + Bar







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2015
NEW RESTAURANT GUIDE
& PREVIEW



Photo courtesy of Red Wagon Pizza Company

RED WAGON PIZZA COMPANY

The beloved pizza truck from the Linden Hills Farmer's market has found a permanent home at the edge of Edina and Minneapolis. The blistered crust and gooey cheese translates well into this welcome neighborhood addition.
5416 Penn Ave. S., Minneapolis
www.redwagon-mpls.com

REVIVAL

The second venture from the team behind Corner Table has a bunch of Northerners singing Southern-style praises. Really, we don't like to brag, but the crispy fried goodness inside the '70s sleek stylized space might just be the best taste of the South this side of the Mason-Dixon line. Collards are savory, twinged with a hint of vinegar. Mac and cheese swims in cream sauce beneath a crackling, crisp crust. Hush puppies so good you'll want to slap your mama. You know, if we need that sort of thing up here.
4257 Nicollet Ave., Minneapolis
www.revivalmpls.com

SAGUARO

You've heard of Tex-Mex, but how many spots boast Arizona-Mex? This spot serves a chimichanga there is no shame in loving. The entire menu is fresh and comforting. This restaurant is a crowd-pleaser.
5309 Lyndale Ave. S.
Minneapolis
www.saguarompls.com

SAINT DINETTE

It's hard to remember the days before The Strip Club Meat and Fish, when the Maria Avenue restaurant wasn't a Twin Cities dining destination. Where did we get our poutine? Craft cocktails? House-made tonic or grassfed steaks? J.D. Fratzke and Tim Niver are finally ready to unleash another new restaurant for us to wrap our heads around. Saint Dinette is slated for a mid-soon (May?) opening in the Rayette Lofts building in Lowertown. The food is inspired by all the places the French have settled in the new world. That's everything from the French fur trappers to Creole cooking. Adam Eaton will run the kitchen and the first few bites of what he's been working on at their recent pop ups have been extraordinary. Laurel Elm will run the front of house.
261 E. 5th St., Lowertown
St. Paul
www.saintdinette.com

SALSA A LA SALSA (FORMERLY BONEYARD)

The third location of the down-home Mexican eats is every bit as good as the others, but the expanded menu and bar are a perfect fit for the Uptown address. I'm just waiting for the weather to warm up enough to spend an afternoon lounging on that patio feasting on enchiladas.
2841 Hennepin Ave.
Minneapolis
www.salsauptown.com

SPOON AND STABLE

Everybody wants a reservation at Spoon and Stable. For good reason. It's the hottest new restaurant to pop onto an already scorching-hot restaurant scene. From the moment lauded chef and native son Gavin Kaysen first announced he was leaving NYC and the helm of Café Boulud to open his very own restaurant in Minneapolis, countless foodies, critics, well-wishers and nosy neighbors have hoped to snag a table at this, the latest in a slew of much-anticipated restaurants. According to Kaysen, since they began taking reservations in November, the phone has not stopped ringing. Off the hook.
The beauty of the Spoon and Stable menu lies in its versatility. You can adventure eat your way across it, sharing several dishes from each of six areas currently on the winter menu. Experiment. Be bold. Who knows when you'll get another reservation. As always, Chef will happily course out any combination for you. Conversely, you can selfishly indulge in a singular bowl of soup and an entree, leaving the table completely satisfied.
—by Bradley Traynor, "Eat the Menu with Bradley Traynor," Issue 512


OUR SCENE

EAT THE MENU | BY BRADLEY TRAYNOR | PHOTOS BY HUBERT BONNET

EAT THE MENU: SPOON AND STABLE


BY BRADLEY TRAYNOR



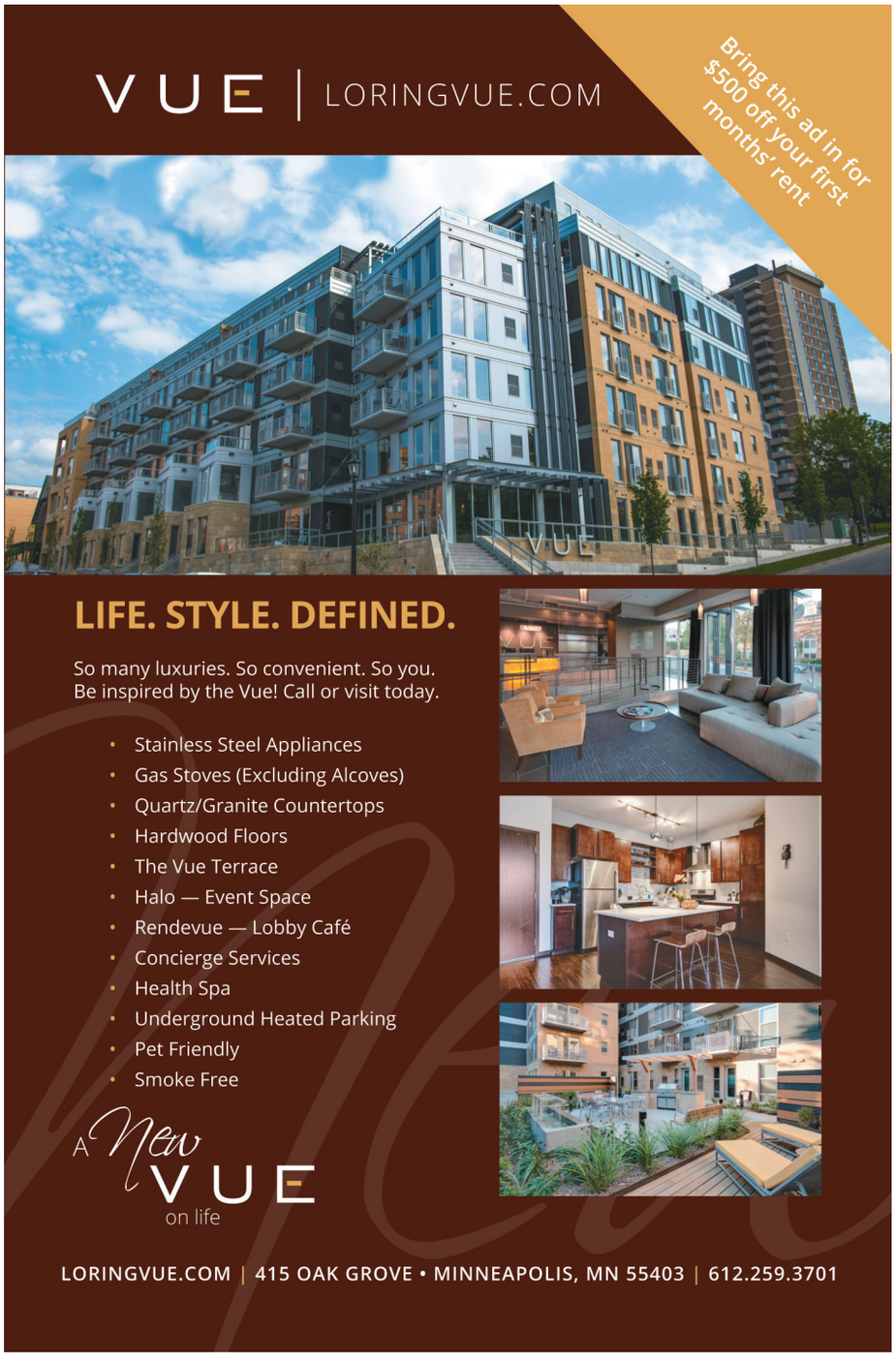
SURLY BREWING COMPANY

Chef Jorge Guzman's menu beautifully compliments the full-flavored beers that Surly built a reputation upon. The spectacular new brewery serves food worth lingering over. Start with the hot fries, loosen your belt, and settle in for some serious eats.
520 Malcolm Ave. SE, Minneapolis
www.surlybrewing.com

*
SURLY BREWING COMPANY

Photo courtesy of Surly Brewing Company





2015
NEW RESTAURANT GUIDE
& PREVIEW

THE COPPER HEN CAKERY & KITCHEN

In just a few short years, Nicollet Avenue has become a road map of where the Twin Cities food scene is heading. From mole to pho noodles, the flavors of the world are just steps away on the Minneapolis avenue aptly called "Eat Street." One of the newest stops on this global culinary adventure is The Copper Hen Cakery and Kitchen; a hip and yet cozy farm-to-table bakery and restaurant owned by Danielle Bjorland and her husband Chris.

"We really wanted to return to the roots of good home cooking which begins with the farm," she explained. "So, we decided on a made-from-scratch menu, we don't source anything that isn't homemade and we buy local as much as possible."

—by Pat Evans, "Taste Buds with Pat Evans," Issue 499


OUR SCENE
TASTE BUDS WITH PAT EVANS | PHOTOS BY HUBERT BONNET

The Copper Hen Cakery and Kitchen

HOME-BAKED GOODNESS ON EAT STREET

* THE COPPER HEN CAKERY & KITCHEN

* THE SALT CELLAR



Photo by Hubert Bonnet

THE SALT CELLAR

This modern take on an old-school steakhouse had a bit of a shaky start. The food was great, then it wasn't. The service was friendly and then it wasn't. Now, everything seems to be smoothing out. The bar menu is a welcome addition to the neighborhood with a tasty burger and crave-able french fries (order them with a side of cochon sauce). The dining room works for hosting parents or date night, slightly formal, but not too fancy that jeans are out of place. Skip the cocktails and dive into the fantastic wine list.
173 Western Ave. N., St. Paul
www.saltcellarsaintpaul.com

TINTO CUCINA

More tacos for Uptown! (I wasn't kidding about that.) The former Spill the Wine restaurant space has added a pile of tacos and authentic Mexican cooking alongside a full bar.
901 W. Lake St., Minneapolis
www.tintompls.com

TONGUE IN CHEEK

The revitalization of the Payne neighborhood got another boost when Tongue in Cheek opened. My favorite time of day to visit is happy hour when small bites are ridiculously affordable (like a couple of dollars) and you can order small, super-cheap sips of all of their crafted cocktails. Dinner is chef-ed up takes on standard comforts including a wonderfully decadent burger.
989 Payne Ave. S., St. Paul
www.tongueincheek.biz

VELLEE DELI

Remember when the skyway restaurants were all up in arms about the food trucks? Well, now the food trucks are finding homes, and some are actually in a skyway. The Vellee Deli spot has brought a welcome makeover to a former Taco Bell space and brought along their Asian-Mexican fusion menu. It's every bit as good as you remember from last summer. It's just now you don't have to jockey for curb space.
Baker Center, Minneapolis
www.velleedeli.com

WORKSHOP AT UNION

The great return of Stewart Woodman, the chef who gave us Five, the original Levain, and Heidi's, serves as the steward of Crave's culinary program. Inside this hodge-podge-decorated spot he tests dishes and menus; it's his creative workshop. The food melds the everybody-pleaser style of Crave with a flash of downtown Minneapolis hip-kid cool. When it works, it's a fun ride.
731 Hennepin Ave., Minneapolis
www.workshopatunion.com ■





2015
DINING OUT
FOR LIFE PICKS

Dining Out For Life 2015

BY BRADLEY TRAYNOR

It's that time of year again: Dining Out For Life, an annual fundraising event involving the generous participation of volunteers, corporate sponsors, and restaurants. You'll see KARE11 personalities, Sven Sundgaard, Rena Sarigianopoulos, and Blake McCoy—in addition to hundreds of volunteers—wearing red aprons at your favorite restaurants that are generously donating portions of their proceeds to benefit The Aliveness Project. Dining Out For Life is now produced in 60 cities throughout the United States and Canada. Across North America, more than $3 million dollars a year is raised to support the missions of 60 outstanding HIV/AIDS service organizations. This year 200 participating restaurants in the Twin Cities, Duluth, Mankato, and Rochester have agreed to donate a portion of their proceeds to The Aliveness Project on April 30. Read the highlighted choices of hotspots and then plan your day to "Dine Out, Do Good" by checking out the full list of participating restaurants and the percentage of proceeds they'll be donating at www.diningoutforlife.com/minneapolis.



* RENA, SVEN, & BLAKE

Photo by Mike Hnida

THE SALOON
Donating 100%
Dinner
The Saloon has food? Sure does! And it's legit. There's absolutely no need to find yourself famished on the dancefloor or peckish after a couple cocktails on the patio. Nibble some nachos or throw carbcaution to the wind and splurge on a big fat, juicy burger with fries and all the fixings. My money's on the fried mushrooms and Southwest egg rolls. Your happy hour is about to get a whole lot happier.
830 Hennepin Ave., Mpls
www.saloonmn.com

BUSTER'S ON 28TH
Donating 21%
Lunch, Dinner
When I first heard there'd been a fire at Buster's last year, two things ran through my head: I hope everyone is okay and, dear god, will I ever have the steak sandwich again? Or the chicken wings with french onion dip? Or the onion rings? Thankfully, the people and the food are just fine. My favorite neighborhood hideaway has reopened its doors and the steak sandwich is better than ever. Ridiculously good food aside, their selection of beers from near and afar is sure to quench the palate of even the haughtiest of hop lovers.
4204 28th Ave., Mpls
www.busterson28th.com

THE BULLDOG DOWNTOWN
Donating 20%
Dinner
Whenever my hot dog quota needs to be met, I head to The Bulldog Downtown. Their creative assortment of crisp, meaty dogs defies convention and titillates taste buds of all shapes and sizes. Pro tip: do the Double Dare and pick two dogs from their devilish lineup. Who eats just one hot dog anyway? Guaranteed winners include the OMGyoucandothat?? bacon-wrapped Danger Dog, the perfectly porky Oinker Dog and the, wait for it, comfort food classic Mac N' Cheese Dog. You're welcome. Upgrade to tots and your life is complete.
1111 Hennepin Ave., Mpls
www.thebulldogdowntown.com

NEW SCENIC CAFE
Donating 20%
Lunch, Dinner
Never should a road trip to Minnesota's North Shore be complete without a meal at the New Scenic Cafe. This secret garden of beautiful, delicious food nestled between Duluth and Two Harbors offers weary travelers a magical interlude of taste along some of the most scenic (get it?) shoreline in the state. The menu ebbs and flows with the season so don't be alarmed if that favorite dish from your last visit has been replaced with something even more special.
5461 North Shore Dr., Duluth
www.sceniccafe.com

EDEN AVENUE GRILL
Donating 35%
Dinner
For more years than I can count, Friday nights meant friends and good food at the Eden Avenue Grill. This quaint little diamond in the rough of Edina just off Highway 100 is the perfect place to unwind after a busy week. The food is solid and the service top drawer. Every week, without fail, I'd order the chicken sandwich with cheddar and bacon. The turkey burger was always a close second. Add fries and you're golden. If you forget to order the chocolate cake, you'll hate yourself the next day. It's scratch-made and probably my favorite in the Cities.
5101 Arcadia Ave., Edina
www.edenavenuegrill.com



Photo by Hubert Bonnet

RINCON 38
Donating 35%
Dinner
You know a restaurant is on your top ten when you find yourself literally eating almost everything on the menu. And scaring your server in the process. That's exactly what happened the first time my partner and I explored Rincon 38. The neighborhood tapas bar in South Minneapolis offers up some of the best small plates in town. Even though I've never actually traveled to Spain, I feel like I've been there after eating at Rincon 38. Grab a friend or four and head over for Dining Out for Life or your next night out. And don't be afraid to overdo it. We set that precedent long ago.
3801 Grand Ave. S., Mpls
www.rincon38.com

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ACQUA Restaurant & Wine Bar · al Vento · Bambú · B.A.N.K. Bar · Restaurant · Experience · Share · Birchwood Cafe · blackbird · Brookside Bar & Grill · Cafe ENA · Carmelo's · chin dian · Cuppa Java · eagle bolt bar · Eden Avenue Grille · East Eli's Food & Cocktails · Elsie's Restaurant, Bar & Bowling Center · Finnish Bistro · Fire Lake Grill House & Cocktail Bar · George & the Dragon · Ground Cafe · Great Waters Brewing Company · Hazel's Northeast · The Herkimer Pub & Brewery · Highland Café & Bakery · Himalayan · HOLA Arepa · Hot Plate · Icehouse · J.D. Hoyt's · Joan's In the Park · Khyber Pass Cafe · L'Etoile du Nord · La Fresa Norteño Mexican Cuisine · Longfellow Grill · The Lowbrow · An Urban Diner The L The Lowry · Lush · Market Bar-B-Que · Mason's Restaurant | Barre · Mattie's Main · Maverick's Wood Grill · Moose Market · moto-i · Vgon Vietnamese Bistro · Nicollet Diner · Pagoda Deli · Piccolo · Pizza Lucé · Pizza Nea · Rinata · Ristro 38 · Rustica Bread Pastry · Saffron Restaurant + Lounge · The Saloon · sawatdee zushiya · Sawatdee Saint Paul Thai Cuisine · Sawatdee Thai Cuisine · sparks · SW Bistro Bar · Toast Wine Bar Cafe · Tongue in Cheek Gastro Pub · Victor's 1959 Café revolutionary Cuban cooking · Wedge Community Co-op · Wilde Roast Cafe · Wise Acre Eatery · yum! · Zen Box Izakaya Japanese Kitchen

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Dine out at one of these participating restaurants on Thursday, April 30, and a portion of the proceeds will be donated to **The Aliveness Project,** a community center that serves people living with HIV/AIDS. **It's the easiest good deed you'll do this year — all you have to do is eat!**

B = Breakfast **L** = Lunch **D** = Dinner 🍸 = Includes alcohol ★ = 50%+

PLATINUM 35%+

- D — Acqua Restaurant - Forest Lake
- D — Acqua Restaurant - White Bear Lake
- D — al Vento
- D 🍸 — Bambú
- L D — BANK
- D 🍸 — Birchwood Cafe
- B L D 🍸 — Blackbird
- L D — Brookside Bar & Grill
- D — Cafe Ena
- L D 🍸 — Carmelo's Ristorante
- D — Chin Dian
- D 🍸 — Cuppa Java ★
- L D — eagleBOLTbar ★ (100%)
- D 🍸 — Eden Avenue Grill
- L D — Eli's East Food & Cocktails
- B L D — Elsie's Restaurant, Bar, & Bowling Center
- D 🍸 — Finnish Bistro ★ (100%)
- B 🍸 — FireLake Grill House & Cocktail Bar ★
- B — FireLake Grill House & Cocktail Bar - Mall of America ★
- L D 🍸 — George and the Dragon
- L D 🍸 — Grand Café
- L D — Great Waters Brewing Company
- B L D 🍸 — Hazel's Northeast
- L D — The Herkimer Pub & Brewery
- D — Highland Café & Bakery
- D — Himalayan Restaurant
- D — Hola Arepa
- B L 🍸 — Hot Plate
- D 🍸 — Icehouse
- D — J.D. Hoyt's
- D 🍸 — joan's in the Park
- L D 🍸 — Khyber Pass Cafe
- B L 🍸 — L'Etoile Du Nord Cafe
- D — La Fresca
- B 🍸 — Longfellow Grill
- L D — The Lowbrow
- B 🍸 — The Lowry
- D — LUSH FOOD BAR ★ (100%)
- L D 🍸 — Market Bar-B-Que
- D 🍸 — Mason's Restaurant Barre ★
- L D — Mattie's on Main
- L D 🍸 — Maverick's Wood Grill
- L D — The Meet Market
- L D — Moto-i Ramen and Sake House
- D — Ngon Vietnamese Bistro
- B L D — The Nicollet Diner
- D — Pagoda
- D — Piccolo ★ (100%)
- L D 🍸 — Pizza Lucé - Downtown Mpls (DINE IN ONLY)
- L D 🍸 — Pizza Lucé - Hopkins (DINE IN ONLY)
- L D 🍸 — Pizza Lucé - Richfield (DINE IN ONLY)
- L D 🍸 — Pizza Lucé - St. Paul (DINE-IN ONLY)
- L D 🍸 — Pizza Lucé - Seward (DINE IN ONLY)
- L D 🍸 — Pizza Lucé - Uptown (DINE IN ONLY)
- L D 🍸 — Pizza Nea ★
- D — Rinata
- D — Rincón 38
- B L — Rustica Bakery
- D 🍸 — Saffron Restaurant & Lounge
- D — The Saloon ★ (100%)
- L D — Sawatdee & Zushiya of Maple Grove
- D 🍸 — Sawatdee St. Paul
- L D — Sawatdee Thai Restaurant - Minneapolis
- D — Sparks
- D — SW Craft Bar
- D 🍸 — Toast Wine Bar & Cafe ★
- D — Tongue In Cheek
- B L D — Victor's 1959 Café
- B L D 🍸 — The Wedge Table
- B L D — Wilde Roast Cafe
- B L D 🍸 — Wise Acre Eatery
- B L D — Yum! Kitchen & Bakery (Take Out Only)
- D — Zen Box Izakaya

GOLD 25-34%

- L D — 128 Cafe
- L D — Angelina's Kitchen
- L D 🍸 — Baldy's BBQ Dinkytown
- D 🍸 — Be'wiched Deli
- D — Broders' Terzo Vino Bar
- B L D — Butter Bakery Cafe
- B L 🍸 — Colossal Cafe - Minneapolis
- B L 🍸 — Colossal Cafe - St. Paul
- D 🍸 — Corner Table
- D 🍸 — Curran's Restaurant
- L D — Day Block Brewing Company
- L D — Ernie's Pub & Grille
- D — Erte & The Peacock Lounge
- D 🍸 — GYST Fermentation Bar
- D — HauteDish
- L D — Jakeeno's Pizza & Pasta
- D — Le Town Talk French Diner & Drinkery
- L D — Lyon's Pub
- B L D 🍸 — Marin Restaurant & Bar
- B L — May Day Café
- L D — McCoy's Public House
- D — Nightingale
- B L D 🍸 — Pilgrimage Café
- L D 🍸 — Pizzeria Lola
- L D — Q fanatic BBQ
- L D 🍸 — Rainbow Restaurant
- L D 🍸 — Signature Cafe
- B L — Swede Hollow Cafe
- B L — Twin Cities Leather & Latte

SILVER 20-24%

- D — The 5-8 Club
- D — The 5-8 Grill & Bar
- D — 5-8 Grill & Tap
- D — 5-8 Tavern & Grill
- L D — Angelo's Italian Restaurant
- B L D — Barbette
- B L 🍸 — Black Dog Cafe
- L D — Black Forest Inn
- D — Black Sheep Pizza
- D — Borough & Parlour
- L D — Boston's
- B L D — Bruegger's Prairie Village
- B L D — Bruegger's Westwind Plaza
- B L D — Bryant Lake Bowl
- D — The Bulldog Downtown
- L D — The Bulldog Lowertown
- L D — The Bulldog Uptown
- D — Buona Sera Ristorante and Wine Bar
- L D — Buster's on 28th
- D 🍸 — The Butcher Block Restaurant
- L D — Campus Pizza and Pasta
- D 🍸 — Cheeky Monkey
- L D — Chiang Mai Thai
- D 🍸 — Chilkoot Café and Cyclery
- B L D — COCOA LOCO Burgers & Shakes
- D — Coup D'état
- D — Craftsman Restaurant
- L D 🍸 — Crooners Lounge and Supper Club
- L D — Dan Kelly's Pub
- B L D — Dunn Brothers Coffee - Linden Hills
- D — Eat Street Social
- L D — Faces Mears Park
- L D — Foxy Falafel
- L D 🍸 — Galactic Pizza
- B L D — Gigi's Café
- L D 🍸 — Ginger Hop
- L D — Gold Nugget Tavern and Grille
- B L D — Hard Times Café
- D — It's Greek to Me
- L D 🍸 — Kafé 421
- B L D — Kramarczuk Sausage Co. Inc.
- D — Kyatchi
- D — Lake & Irving
- D — Lone Oak Grill
- L D — Lone Spur Grill and Bar
- D 🍸 — Loring Kitchen & Bar
- D — Luna Rossa Trattoria & Wine Bar
- D 🍸 — Lyn 65
- L D — Manny's Tortas
- D 🍸 — Marx Fusion Bistro
- D 🍸 — The Melting Pot
- D — Midori's Floating World Cafe
- B L D 🍸 — Milton's V V B
- D 🍸 — Namaste Café
- L D 🍸 — Nonna Rosa's Ristorante Italiano
- D — North East Social
- L D — Northbound Smokehouse & Brewpub
- L D — Papa John's - 34 locations
- L D 🍸 — Park Tavern
- L D — Pat's Tap
- L D — The Pourhouse
- D — PUB 819
- D — The Rabbit Hole
- D — Rail Station Bar & Grill
- L D — Red Stag Supperclub
- L D — Republic Seven Corners
- L D — Republic Calhoun Square
- D — Salut Bar Americain - St. Paul
- L D 🍸 — The Sample Room
- D 🍸 — Sapor Café/Bar
- L D — Sen Yai Sen Lek
- D — Smack Shack
- D — Stanley's NE Bar Room
- L D — The Third Bird
- B L D — Tiny Diner
- D 🍸 — Tooties On Lowry
- L D — Trattoria da Vinci
- D — The UNION Rooftop
- L 🍸 — W.A. Frost and Company
- B 🍸 — Ward 6 Food & Drink
- D — The Workshop @ UNION

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- L D 🍸 — Pizza Lucé - Duluth (DINE IN ONLY)

SILVER 20-24%

- B L D 🍸 — Amazing Grace Bakery and Cafe
- L D 🍸 — New Scenic Café

LANESBORO

PLATINUM 35%+

- D 🍸 — Old Village Hall Restaurant

MANKATO

GOLD 25-34%

- L D — Pub 500

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3758 Nicollet Ave., Mpls
www.kyatchi.com

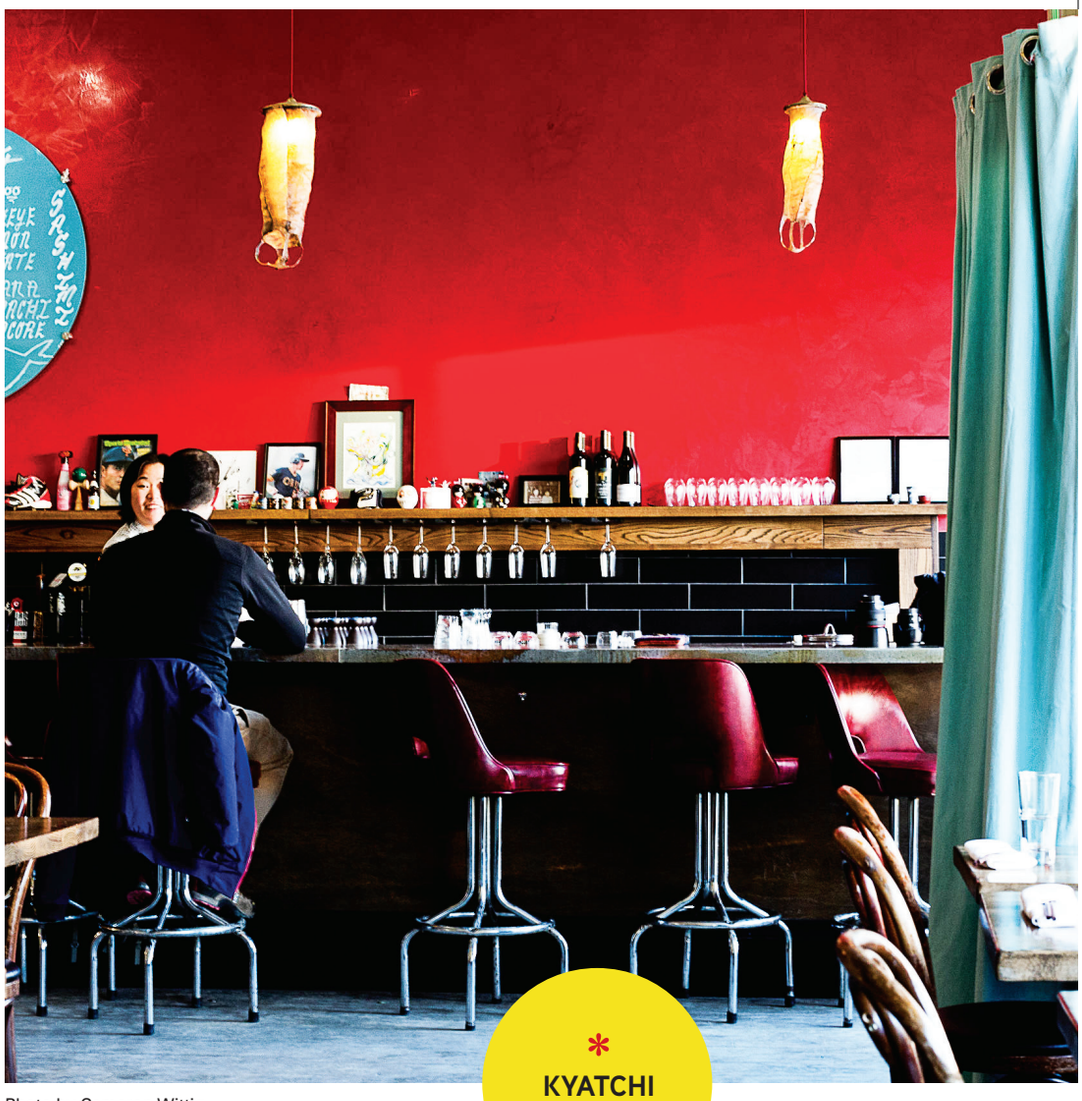


Photo by Cameron Wittig

* KYATCHI

NGON VIETNAMESE BISTRO
Donating 35%
Dinner
St. Paul is home to a plethora of wonderful Vietnamese restaurants. Ngon is a jewel among them. My first meal there was Valentine's Day a couple years back. It was the perfect place for a romantic evening, especially for two people who love to explore foods from afar. The ambiance is intimate and the food is a welcome mix of traditional and modern. The marriage of French and Vietnamese cuisine creates delightful surprises all over the menu. Soulwarming pho is just as comfortable next to Croque Madame as it is fresh shrimp spring rolls. Don't overlook the spot as a happy hour hang out either. With sausage sliders.
799 University Ave., St. Paul
www.ngonbistro.com

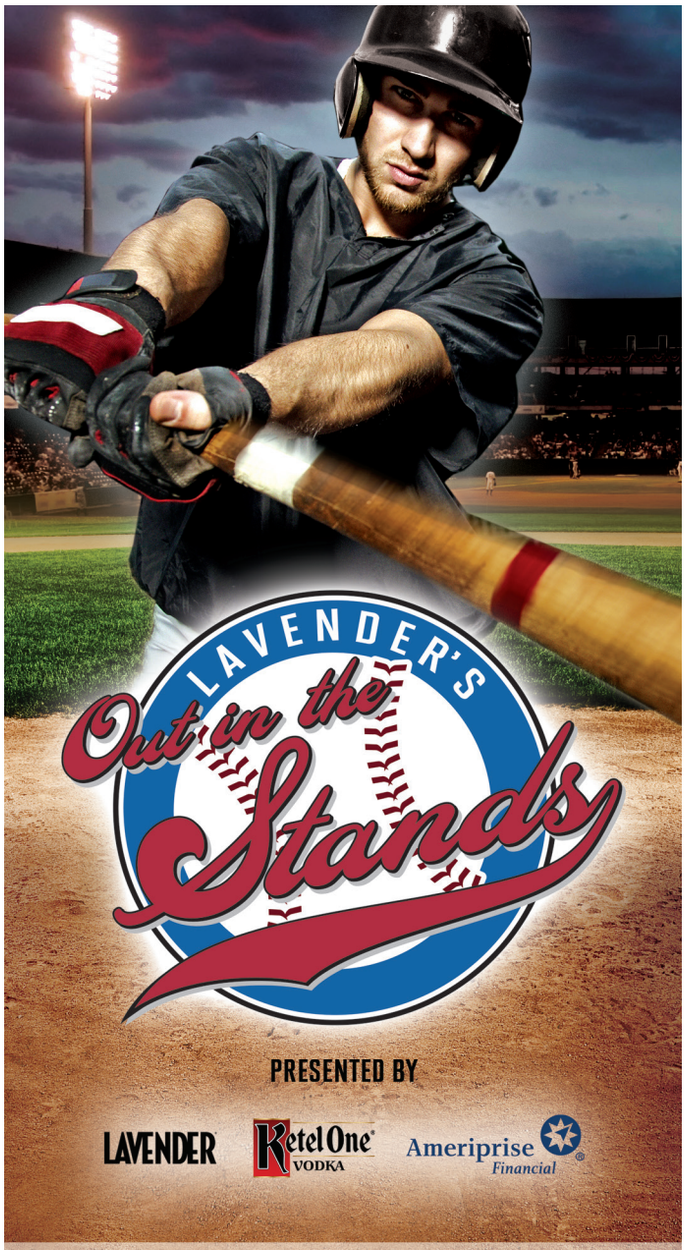
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Bowl, watch sports, eat, drink, repeat. Any combination of the aforementioned activities goes at Park Tavern. It's not a cliché to say there really is just about something for everyone at the 50-plus-year-old Twin Cities landmark. Have a beer with the buds, bowl a game or two, or just settle in to a plate of nachos and a burger. Wings and fried pickles are sure to make any night of the week better than the one before. If you're feeling a bit fancier, don't miss out on the once-a-month chef's nights. Each month Chef Daniel elevates the alley way with a five-course feast at a ridiculously reasonable price.
3401 Louisiana Ave., St. Louis Park
www.parktavern.net

MATTIE'S ON MAIN
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Lunch, Dinner
There's always something fun going on at Mattie's on Main. Whether Erin Schwab is belting out Broadway showtunes or drag queens are camping it up during Sunday brunch, the colorful eatery along historic St. Anthony Main makes an event out of anything. The menu is equally eventful. And relaxed. The Monte Cristo dippers, for example, take everything you love about the classic sammy and turn it into a playful app you'll covet at the cost your dinner companions. Tuck into a good burger or any number of solid sandwiches, but don't forget to get a milkshake. Adult or otherwise, the flavors are creative and clearly designed to put a big fat smile on your face.
43 Main St. SE, Mpls
www.mattiesonmain.com

Photo courtesy of Mattie's on Main



* MATTIE'S ON MAIN



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Milwaukee skyline looking down the river.

Milwaukee 2015 – Eat, Play, Love

Milwaukee's weather forecasters state it's "cooler by the lake." Hipsters agree, but they're not talking wind chill, they're voting on the scene.

Anchoring both visions is the city's iconic Art Museum, designed by Spanish star-chitect Calatrava with futuristic flying-buttress bird wings that flap open each day at noon. The art inside is equally arresting, going beyond its Old Masters with shows like haute couture from *Ebony* magazine's Fashion Fair (through May 3), to be followed by Modern Rebels (Van Gogh to Pollack, Warhol to O'Keeffe). Meanwhile, rebellious lobsters have been netted by nearby Harbor House, boasting a postcard-ready lakefront view of twinkling city lights as you slurp the lobster fricassee, lobster Louie salad, bisque, or lobster roll while your politer companions enjoy trout and salmon. (Hint: happy hour oysters, only 89 cents.)

The bird wings point to neighboring caches of cool, like the sophisti-boho Third Ward. In it are behemoth warehouses reborn as epicenters of enjoyment, from out-there galleries (two dozen in the Marshall Building alone) to indie boutiques (don't miss Shoo; Third Ward Jewelry; and NL Suits bespoke tailors, for starters) amid food finds ranging from destination cafes to the Public Market, an indoor emporium celebrating over 20 local vendors, highlighted by St. Paul Fish Co. with its (believe it) $14 lobster menu.

Close by, at trending Walker's Point, enjoy breakfast at Story Hill BKC (bottle, kitchen, cup, celebrating what they do best) on artworks like shakshouka (local eggs in cumin-tomato sauce with smoked lentils, cilantro, goat cheese and sumac mayo) or local Clock Shadow quark on toast with housemade jam and local honey. Return at dinnertime for hog trotters atop kale, oyster mushrooms and cracklings, or pork country spare ribs with yellow peas and cabbage.

Snap up a second breakfast at Engine Company No. 3, which salutes local producers on a menu starring an omelet pillowing smoked pulled pork, sweet peppers, mushrooms and cow's-milk cheese. Pork also rules the kitchen's quiche, Salad Lyonnaise, pork loin sandwich with sweet and sour cabbage, a BLT and Club. Vegetarian? Clamor for the oatmeal with milk and dried fruit, all locally sourced.

Then aim for Second Avenue, where foodies patrol from Indulgence Chocolatier (include the Thai peanut butter truffle in your MDR), hosting pairings with spirits and cheese, to Purple Door Ice Cream; coffee roaster Anodyne; and Movida, a tapas-forward café spotlighting Spanish cheeses, sausages, and jamón, along with toasts (two words: pork belly) and individual paellas with a side of live guitar. Proceed to Clock Shadow Creamery, launched by Bob Wills because, for shame, his cheese-centric state boasted nary an urban factory. Changing that, his goal, he claims, is to "support farmers on the urban fringe" by making superior cheeses that reflect the neighborhood's ethnic heritage, from German quark to Mexican queso blanco. His eco-stewardship shines in floorboards culled from the Pabst Brewing Company and a rooftop garden.

Farm to table? Please. Here, it's roof to table, like Bob's, and the Pfister Hotel's bevy of beehives, supplying its Mason City Grill with a honey-sweetened pavlova topped with honey ice cream. The Pfister's concierge, Peter, a *Downton Abbey* butler-type in cutaway, vest, and silk cravat, regales visitors with tales of its launch in 1893 as proof "the city had arrived!" Betting on a fad, they installed electricity instead of gas. Near its grand staircase and barrel-vaulted ceiling, where painted cherubs frolic, stands the atelier of the hotel's artist in residence, currently showcasing an installation of a fainting couch and "bearskin" rug composed entirely of condoms.

At dinner before a performance at downtown's Milwaukee Repertory Theater, I'm overdosing on pork belly — maple-glazed and coffee-rubbed, served with caramelized apples and a potato-onion cake, abetted by a locally crafted milk stout. But here in Milwaukee, "high on the hog" applies to more than pigging out on the menu's pork schnitzel and sausage-wrapped Scotch egg. Spend time at the iconic Harley-Davidson Museum, aside congregations of hog whisperers, and you'll see what I mean. It salutes every model ever made by the hometown company, starting with Serial Number One in 1903. Inventors Harley and Davidson went from an initial annual production of three bikes to 20,000 ten years later, replacing the postal service's ponies in 1916, outfitting police departments and the U.S. Army in wars abroad, and introducing the Sensational Streamliner in 1925 ("Gee, won't they stop and look at you when you come riding down the pike?"). Then they gave us the 1950s model, "enabling your boy to enjoy the good, clean companionship of other lads interested in healthy outdoor sports" and giving ride to the postwar rebels and outlaws of the movies; and designed custom hogs for daredevil performers like Evel Knieval and Elvis Presley's red model, purchased at age 21 on a $50-a-month payment plan. Climb on for a selfie at the end of your tour.

Prance the three-mile Riverwalk, heading north to Brady Street, to join a food tour (www.milwaukeefoodtours.com) that offers "a meal with a side of neighborhood history," according to our guide, Robert. Brady Street, he explains, has evolved from Polish to Irish to Little Italy,

followed by the dicey years of Miami Vice and Haight-Ashbury lifestyles until the locals said "Enough!" and reclaimed the avenue. Today it's punctuated by our stops — first at Zaffiro's, since 1957 an institution for pizza, Milwaukee-style (twice-baked cracker crust cut into squares, "tavern style"). Next, Cempazuchi, offering authentic Mexican fare like our tinga tacos, as well as tequila/mescal tasting sessions. On to Sciotino Bakery, as Italian as it sounds, for cannoli and an intro to Ham Sundays (another locals-only institution: after church, purchase a pound of ham and get six rolls gratis). Grand finale: Glorioso's Deli, which lives up to its name, offering everything, from prosciutto and Parm to olives and espresso. (Don't miss the Juggling Emporium across the street, just one of many indies showcased along Brady.)

To probe further into the Good Old Days, stroll through the Public Museum's Streets of Old Milwaukee, or its even-older guide to the Near East's Crossroads of Civilization, its brand-new permanent exhibit. The Jewish Museum also brings to life the business, cultural, and religious roots of those residents, including the original Settlement House with its James Beard-praised cookbook, founded by well-off Jewish families to aid more recent immigrants. Surprise bonus: a magnificent 1972 tapestry by Marc Chagall to honor Israel's Prime Minister of 1969, Golda Meir, who grew up in Milwaukee (both were born in Kiev).

Dr. Eckhart Grohmann grew up here, too, and continues to feed his passion, which is collecting artworks from around the world depicting "Man at Work" from the 1600s (there's a Breughel) to today. He donated over 1,000 works to the Milwaukee School of Engineering in 2001, which are housed in a building that's an artwork in its own right, from mosaic-tiled rotunda with stained-glass ceiling to a rooftop garden patrolled by life-size statues. The collection celebrates what the doctor hails as "human achievement" in paintings ranging from "The Building of the Tower of Babel" to "The Building of the Autobahn": shepherds, steel workers, dentists, brewers.

Speaking of which: From macro (Miller, Pabst, Schlitz) to countless craft micros with tasting rooms and tours, breweries are simply table stakes in this city. These days, it's distilleries making a splash, such as MKE's newest, Central Standard, in Walker's Point, producing gin, vodka, and clear whiskey to savor in its tasting room.

The lakefront hosts a festival every summer weekend, beginning with Pride in June. But who can wait till then? Start planning your spree at www.visitmilwaukee.org. ■

END NOTES: ONE GAY CITY!

Over coffee, GLBT insider Paul Williams shared tips. Here's where to hang out.

BARS: This Is It: oldest, "most interesting" bar scene, serving all ages with a '70s dive vibe; **La Cage:** biggest dance club in Walker's Point; **Hybrid:** newer, Brady Street hangout with alternative flavor; **Kruz:** strut your leather in Walker's Point; **Walker's Pint:** lesbian dive bar in Walker's Point; **Fluid:** proving Walker's Point rules.

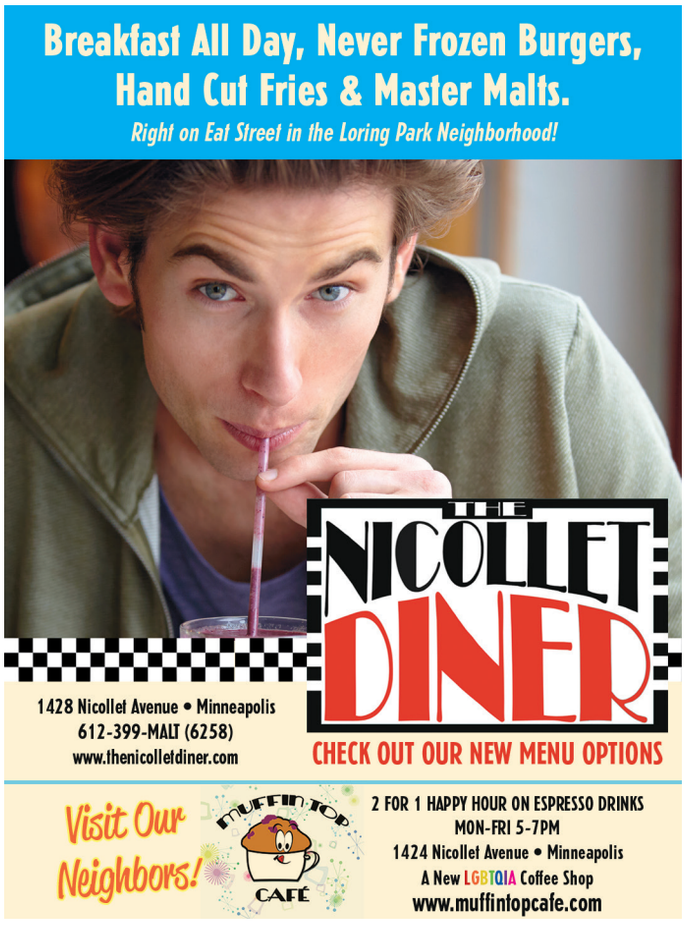
GAY-OWNED CAFES: Cempazuchi: Brady Street's Mexican; **Apostrophe:** "Fantastic!" **Taslow's:** in Cathedral Square, "great happy hour;" **Riviera Maya:** Bayview's Mexican.

GAY-OWNED SHOPS: Bronze: stylin' glasses, VIP treatment; **Outwards:** East Side bookstore with readings; **Boswell:** more mainstream, GLBT-friendly bookstore.

RESOURCES:

MKE LGBT Community Center: counseling, health, students' drop-in; TGIF 2nd Fridays; www.mkeLGBT.org.
Gayborhoods: Brady Street, Third Ward; Walker's Point; Bayview (aka Gayview).
Pride: June 5–7, kicking off MKE's weekly lakeside festival season.
Quest: GLBT magazine.





SPORTS | PLAYING FOR THE OTHER TEAM | BY NELL GELHAUS | PHOTO BY KENNY KIM PHOTOGRAPHY



Sami Grisafe's "Brand New Fairy Tale"

I remember my initial introduction to Sami Grisafe vividly, as one does most painful experiences. Flat on my back in the dirt and grass, I was staring up at a blue sky, breathing hard and trying to figure out how I got there. I slowly stumbled to my feet and turned in time to see the beast that had just flattened me charge down the field and pancake another of my teammates. And there was Sami: blonde ponytail underneath a black helmet, arm poised back to release a tight spiral into the outstretched arms of her receiver, who took off up the sideline. As a defensive end in this women's semi-pro league, it was my job to prevent that exact scenario. I failed miserably. It was a (literally) breathtaking glimpse both at the world of women's tackle football and at the throwing arm of a woman some have described as being the female Joe Montana.

Sharing this experience with Sami four years later, she laughs, "Yeah, my O-line doesn't mess around. They are truly the reason I was able to do anything well as a quarterback."

She did more than well during her time with the Chicago Force Women's Tackle Football Team (and Team USA), and her long list of awards is a testament to her unique talent on the field. From 2007–2014 Sami herself was a *force*, winning Offensive Player of the Year twice, team MVP twice, and All-American honors in two different leagues each year of her career. She also led the U.S. women's football team to gold medals at the IFAF Women's World Championships in both 2010 (Sweden) and 2013 (Finland), winning the tournament MVP for the latter.

When she finally retired last year, the *Windy City Times* ranked the occasion as number one in the Top 10 Chicago LGBT Sports Moments of 2014.

"[Retiring was] definitely difficult, as is any major change in life. I was planning on retiring after we won the National Championship in 2013, but decided to come back for one more season. Then, my ACL was torn in a game and I took it as the universe telling me, 'You should've retired last year. This is a sign.' I exceeded my dreams with football; it's time to give my other lifelong aspirations the time and energy they require."

Now Grisafe (pronounced Gris-AH-fee), who has devoted much of her adult life to football, can focus on her rapidly rising music career. Growing up in Redlands, California, the daughter of parents who made up the country duo *Two of Hearts*, Sami picked up the guitar around the same time she picked up a football: at age 10. "I was too busy with sports to spend the time it required. I picked it up again at 18 and it stuck. I was given my first ukulele on my 20th birthday and have been playing both instruments ever since." She spent her childhood tagging along as her parents performed at state fairs, parties, and weddings all over California. Her parents also encouraged her to give acting a try, which ultimately led her to the Chicago College of the Performing Arts at Roosevelt University on scholarship.

Sami, who is openly gay and currently single, says, "I knew I wanted to be on the stage since I was about four years old. I spent most of my early years trying to sound like a Disney Princess, trying to be more feminine. So, I guess you could say I've been acting for a long time. Pretending like I am someone else is familiar to me. It wasn't until I came out in my twenties and was strong enough to admit who I was, that I was able to discover my own voice both musically and personally."

That voice is equal parts Melissa Ethridge and Sheryl Crow, raw and powerful. It drew national attention during a ukulele-accompanied performance of the National Anthem prior to taking the field at the 2013 IFAF Women's World Championship gold medal game. *The Huffington Post* called her performance "… one of the most inspiring versions of the 'Star-Spangled Banner' we've ever heard." This year, she's releasing her third album, her first solo project, *Brand New Fairy Tale*, in "chapters," two singles at a time, in the style of a digital 45 with an A side and a B side. The first two singles, "Brand New Fairy Tale" and "Tiny Victories," were released on Valentine's Day, by indie record label Vicious Muse.

It's worth mentioning that Grisafe is already an award winning singer-songwriter and well-known in the Chicago music scene. In 2012, she earned six Grammy pre-nominations for her album *Atlantis*, and in 2013 received the Chicago Music Award for Best Rock Entertainer. She performed at the RedGorilla Fest and OUTlander Fest during SXSW and in other venues such as Chicago's Metro, Double Door, Cubby Bear, and City Winery.

The title track "Brand New Fairy Tale" has a folk-rock style, and features Eric Himan, inspired in part by the marriage equality movement. The lyrics reflect this, telling a story and delivering a powerful message.

I got dreams that I gotta say Aren't represented very well And if nobody writes this down That's OK I guess I'll have to be The one who breaks the spell Write a brand new fairy tale

"As of now, I have written all of the music and lyrics to the songs on my albums. I collaborate with fellow musicians…for the arrangement. I say 'as of now' because I really love collaborating and am not averse to writing with people whom I admire. I will always write about things that move me: moments from my life, social issues and stories I believe need to be heard. I think it's important to connect personally to every song I write. Some songs are about experiences that happened to me first-hand. Some are about my beliefs, politics, or

CONTINUED ON PAGE 52



LAVENDER'S

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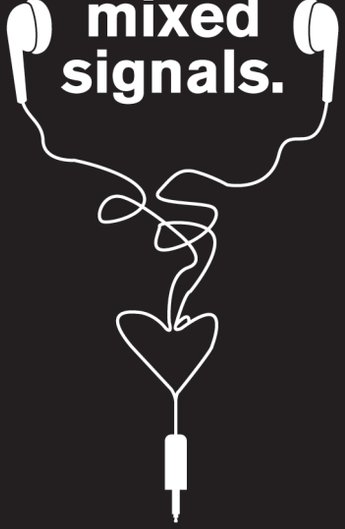
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something that happened to someone close to me. Songwriting is my way of navigating life."

Grisafe's musical influences are wide-ranging and rooted in the records her parents played when she was young: folk, pop, and rock from the '70s. Janis Joplin was a particular favorite. "My mom would constantly tell me to 'listen to the story' and so lyrics became very important to me. I am still a big fan of Garth Brooks, Tim McGraw, and Reba. And I love '90s rock! Gin Blossoms, Melissa Etheridge, Nirvana, Foo Fighters, No Doubt, Alanis, Matchbox 20, and my favorite, Counting Crows. In college I was all about Ani DiFranco and still am. I've seen her live so many times and every time she blows me away."

The B side single, "Tiny Victories," defies any particular musical genre with elements of blues, a little funk, and a little classic rock. With daring guitar riffs throughout, the tight harmonies and raw vocals are a bold statement, conveying a story every lesbian (or not) can relate to: that of a relationship gone bad.

I never quite understood the value / Of having the last word / Laughing the last laugh / But these things seem very important to you / So darlin' go ahead / Take your tiny victories

Both singles were recorded at the Chicago Recording Company and feature of the some of the most talented musicians in Chicago including Matt Hines, John Blasucci, Ilaria Lantieri, Logan Penington, and Linsea Waugh. The tracks were produced by the go-to live mixing engineer for many major musical festivals across the U.S., Steve Weeder, and Adam Ayan who has mastered tracks for 20 Grammy winners. Collaboration is significant for Grisafe, something she wants to continue to explore. Having made her footprint in Chicago, she dreams of a national and international fan base, with aspirations that include acting, writing, and speaking. "I want to create experiences that move people to action. Our society does more talking than doing and I want to do my part to change that reality. My great grandmother would say, 'The less you do, the less you want to do.' So, I like to stay busy."

Though she considers California home, Chicago will always be her home away from home. "I moved to Chicago when I was 18 and became a woman here, so it is very close to my heart as it is responsible for so many important memories and lessons. I wrote a song about my dual homes called 'California' which will be on *Brand New Fairy Tale*."

While living in both cities, Sami supports numerous GLBT organizations and has performed for Human Rights Campaign events and at the marriage equality bill signing at the request of Illinois governor Pat Quinn. For her athletic, musical, and social-political accomplishments, she was named one of the 10 Chicago Lesbians to Look Out For in 2012 by the L Stop.

Minneapolis ranks high on the list of places she'd like to tour, which she will begin doing this fall. "I have wanted to play Minneapolis for some time now, so we will definitely make it a priority to put it on the list of cities for the next tour. I love how the people in the Twin Cities support local music and theater. I think it's beautiful."

Just as there was no slowing down Grisafe on the field, there seems to be no slowing her down in her music career either. The official music video for "Brand New Fairy Tale" is currently in post-production, being produced by Vicious Muse and Glam Tie Media and visualized by Ink Factory. She was featured on a March 22 broadcast of OUT Chicago, a local Chicago gay radio show, performed at House of Blues in the Voodoo Lounge in Los Angeles on March 26, and was a guest on LA-based Adam Carolla's show on March 31. Her album is available on iTunes and her website, www.samigrisafe.com. Look for her soon in the Minneapolis area, and watch out for those offensive linewomen. ■





LEATHER LIFE | BY STEVE LENIUS

The Leather Life Interview: Ramien Pierre, International Mr. Leather 2014

When Ramien Pierre, the current International Mr. Leather, was in Minneapolis recently as a judge for the Mr. Minneapolis Eagle contest, he graciously let me interview him.

Where did you grow up?

Ramien Pierre: I grew up in a little town called West Chester, Pennsylvania. I'm an only child, raised by a single mother who was working a lot, so I was a latchkey kid. I didn't really play with other kids. I was mostly alone with books and '70s sitcoms.

I am a product of public education my entire life until my junior year in high school, when I went to Westtown School, a Quaker boarding school, because of an Upward Bound program. I'm very fond of the Quakers. On my title vest, they were able to work some Quaker references into the art.

How did you get into leather?

RP: My first leather event was MAL [Mid-Atlantic Leather] in 2009. I had been interested in leather prior to that, but it was hard to figure out how to talk to people about it. MAL was my first time where I said I think I'm into leather, I think I'm into kink, and I sort of dipped my toes in the water. Then later, Onyx [a club for leathermen of color] was having their annual run for pledges, and after getting my toes wet in 2009, that was when I finally jumped into the pool by becoming a member of Onyx.

The Onyx thing led me to want to be a part of the larger leather community, and for me, the Mr. DC Eagle contest seemed like a great way to push and challenge and make myself commit to a larger group of people.

So you won the Mr. DC Eagle title and competed in IML. What was your IML experience like?

RP: Thursday evening, after orientation, I fell apart. I was in my hotel room, I was crying, and every horrible thing I was thinking about myself, every single self-doubt I could possibly have, was running in my head on a loop. My partner was there, watching helplessly while my inner critic just went berserk.



Photo by Steve Lenius

So it was a small miracle that the next morning I got out of bed, got into the shower, got my boots on. What did it for me was, I thought about my community back home at the Eagle, and I said, I don't have to do this contest, right? They said I didn't have to do it, so if I said now I wanted to quit, they would forgive me, right? They'd still accept me. And I realized, no they wouldn't. They would talk about me all day. And that terror was more than—

All the other terror.

RP: Yes! Exactly! That was louder than my inner critic.

And then before I opened the door my boyfriend said to me, I'm really nervous about you going. But one thing I knew about IML was that, yes, it's about being yourself, but there also is a bit of showmanship. People come from across the country and across the world, and they want to see this parade of masculinity and people embracing their sexuality and community. They want to see a show, and part of my job was to be a performer. And I said, I'm gonna get out there and I'm gonna give a good show. So I was having a really, really good time on stage.

When they called my name as the new IML, all I remember is getting up there and hollering. I was just so excited. I yelled like I didn't have any good sense.

I have pictures of you yelling.

RP: And what you don't know about me is I am not a yeller. That was very unlike me. That whole Quaker schooling thing? I'm a good fit for Quakers. I am quiet and reserved.

What do you do professionally?

RP: My full-time gig is arranging training for engineers at NASA, and my part-time job is doing corporate training. My previous careers were all in education—I was a seventh- and eighth-grade history teacher. I was assistant dean of students at a boarding school and at a small liberal arts college. I was a not-for-profit arts manager, I was executive director of a dance company, and then administrator for the education department at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts.

You went to Harvard.

RP: I collect Ivy League degrees. I have a master's degree from Harvard in what's called mind/brain education and a master's degree from Brown in social studies teaching.

And now you're working on a doctorate at George Washington University.

RP: Yes, and what you can't see on the audio recording is me hanging my head in shame, because I haven't done as much work as I would like. It's a doctorate in human and organizational learning. With my life and my charity work and the leather title, it's been hard to stay on top of school.

Either you're crazy or—

RP: It doesn't have to be "or," it can be "and." I'm crazy and ambitious. I kinda feel like, you get one life, I'm gonna get a lot out of it. ■

Twin Cities Gay Pool League Annual Year-End Tournament

March 21 at Bar Zia, Downtown Minneapolis



TCGPL Treasurer Brant Vlasak (left) presented a check for $1,500 to The Aliveness Project Food Shelf, represented by Tim Marburger, Director of Fundraising and Special Events



First Place TCGPL Team of the Year, Bar Zia I, (from left) Joel, John, Troy, Brant



Second Place TCGPL Team of the Year, Bar 19 II, (from left) Scott, Jared, Jeremy, Nate (not pictured)



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RIDE REVIEW | BY RANDY STERN | PHOTOS BY RANDY STERN

2015.5 Volvo S60





Why do we love Volvos so much?

The first reason would be the company's commitment to occupant safety and structural rigidity. Older Volvos were boxy for a reason: strong roofs, built-in crumple zones, and durable materials were made to ensure that anyone who rode in one will walk away from an accident in one.

You might even agree with someone who owns a Volvo on philosophical, intellectual, and ideological terms. There is probably a survey somewhere that shows how progressively minded Volvo owners are over other brands. You could do so scientifically…or stereotypically…but, if you go to where progressive folks shop, your thoughts may be confirmed as soon as you pull into the parking lot.

If you consider that in the 1990s, Volvo Cars really loved us. They created ads showing a GLBT couple enjoying their station wagon — and their lives. That was very revolutionary for us. We responded by buying their vehicles, new and pre-owned, knowing that someone back at Volvo Cars headquarters really and truly cared about us to advertise to us.

Perhaps there is also another stereotype of our region: the Scandinavian heritage of our ancestors that settled toward the headwaters of the great Mississippi River. The emigration of Northern Europeans onto the lands of the Ojibwe and Dakota were different than others that had settled elsewhere in this country. Winters were harsh, but it was in their blood. As a Swedish car company, Volvo would be welcomed by the ancestors of these settlers form the early-to-mid 1800s as a form of pride in their genealogy.

Already, there is enough to show why we love Volvos.

It was because of these considerations that I tried my best to present a Volvo for review onto *Lavender*. It took four years to do it, but it is here. Maybe it was apt to have as our first Volvo the sportiest of the line — one of the two best sellers in the brand: the 2015.5 Volvo S60 T6 Drive-E.

I know. The name is a lot to take in. I'd better explain what it all means…

The basic shape of the current S60 has been around since 2010, when it debuted as a 2011 model. It offered a fastback-like shape and some of the most compelling lines ever crafted onto a Volvo. It was intended to compete against the standard bearers in the premium sport sedan segment and had the capacity for high performance models, such as the S60 R and Polestar models. For 2015, Volvo grafted a new look onto the S60 — the "wide mouth." It extends the grille wider for more presence with redesigned lighting above and on the bumper fascia. It is much more appealing than ever.

If the front end does not grab your attention, the side profile will. It speaks to the sporty ones among us. It is that fastback look that makes it stand out in a crowd. There is nothing that blends in, though it has a bit of stealthiness that would surprise unsuspecting enthusiasts of other brands. Add the nineteen-inch alloys for the T6 model and the overall look is truly complete for the premium sports sedan lover in all of us.

The silver color outside provides a cover for one of the most alluring upholstery schemes of all time. It is a very soft leather made of brown and saddle hides. They wrap some of the best seats around, perfectly sized and bolstered with big headrests that are active as triggered upon impact. Front seat room is good, though a tall guy like me would find a sporty low position that is still comfortable on longer journeys. Rear seat room is quite small, with lower seat cushions than expected. It is a touring sedan that could seat a family of four just fine.

The instrument binnacle is very customizable. A series of switches on the left stalk would set the right menus on the sides of the screen, as well as have you choose between three themes. I found Sport the best with its red background and digital speedometer in the middle of the tachometer. A digital fuel gauge is a static display on the left side regardless of which instrumentation theme you choose. The same background is applied to the screen on top of the center stack.

In the center stack is a mix of buttons that control the climate control and Sensus infotainment systems. It may all seem confusing at first, but once you understand each button and control, you would probably use them a few times during the week. The Sensus system itself is extremely comprehensive, especially when the Connect package is on board. Connect has a modem built-in, which needs to be turned on to enable the apps on board. For example, if you use Pandora or TuneIn Radio, you could play either app through the Media menu via the Bluetooth connection with your smartphone. However, if you use the app via Sensus, you could login directly to the car and have full functionality through the system. Redundant switches on the steering wheel for audio controls, along with the cruise control system, are also easy to use once you have their functions down.

No matter whether you use an app via Sensus, your phone, or any of the radio and SiriusXM bands, the available Harmon Kardon system offers a fantastic sound from its twelve speakers positioned perfectly around the cabin.

In the past, a T6 would mean an in-line six-cylinder engine with a turbocharger and a mountain of grunt. It also meant not-so-great fuel economy from that engine. As an update to the 2015 models, known as model year 2015.5, Volvo introduced a brand new family of engines: the Drive-E. Instead of six cylinders, these new engines have only four. It is a 2.0-liter unit that has a double shoot of boost: a turbocharger and a supercharger.

Total output is 302 horsepower.

Explaining how it works would detract from the experience. There is no lag from either the turbo or the blower. Power is instant, immediate, and effortlessly quick. It's fast, too — very fast. You do not need an engineering lesson on how the Drive-E T6 engine works. You just have to put your right foot onto the accelerator and take a deep breath.

Sending power between this incredible T6 Drive-E engine and the front wheels is an eight-speed Geartronic transmission. Because of the absence of lag, the transmission quickly responds by going through all of the gears quickly. In eighth, it settles the engine down between 1500–1750 RPM at top highway speeds, right where you want it to be. Paddle shifters work well either in Drive or in the Sport setting of the shifter. If you leave them alone, the Geartronic transmission will simply go back to an automatic mode. The gear lever is fine, but I wished I did not have to have a clear cup holder to work it better.

The S60 has a smooth ride when the tarmac has nothing to give. Add a few bumps, potholes, and cracks, and the S60's suspension responds; however, it shows how absorbent the standard suspension can be, when keeping the peace inside the S60. There is nominal roll through the curves and turns. If you attack a curvy road, the S60 responds accordingly and will reward with a drive you never expect form a Volvo. Scratch that thought, you should always expect great handling from a S60. It is an extremely fun car to drive.

There is more to that story. Response and reaction from the wheel is fantastic. Though one might find a bit of artificial feel from the wheel, quick turns are done with precision, as are other maneuvers. The wheel does feel a bit soft on-center, but it is not enough to detract from the system as a whole. Braking is good, too. Normal and panic stops are linear and without fade. Stopping power is strong and sharp, and the ABS comes on quickly when prompted.

Active safety is what a Volvo is all about. This S60 T6 had the full suite of equipment designed to keep you safe, from active cruise control, lane keeping aid, pedestrian and cyclist detection with full auto brake, collision warning, distance alert, driver alert control, and road sign information. It looks sporty and sleek, but it is still one of the safest cars sold in the USA.

The ultimate result of this new engine would be in fuel consumption. The front-drive T6 Drive-E model turned an amazing 29.9MPG average. *That*…from a 302 horsepower turbocharged and supercharged engine?! Seriously, the numbers did not lie in this case.

Pricing starts at $33,950 for a 2.0-liter turbocharged Drive-E T5 model with front-wheel drive. The T6 Drive-E model sampled here with a few extra packages came with a sticker price of $47,575.

Yes, we tend to go for wagons and SUVs with the Volvo name before looking at the S60. They are indeed practical; some models branded as Cross Country also mean they can be driven away from paved roads. However, the S60 offers a different kind of driving experience that a few people might not be aware of. In other words, Volvos can also be sporty and fun to drive.

That is exactly what the S60 T6 Drive-E is all about. It elevates Volvo to new performance and efficiency levels. With the new engine technology, Volvo should never be judged on being solely a safe vehicle with nothing else to show for it. Include the S60's sporty styling, and consider the Volvo complete.

As much as I would rather reminisce about the great Volvos of the past and the socio-economic-political-intellectual history of them, there is one thing that stands out about today's S60. Just a quick turn in this fast, fun car will make you forget about the past. ■





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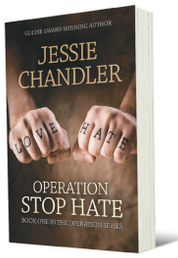
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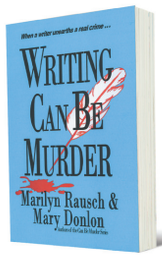
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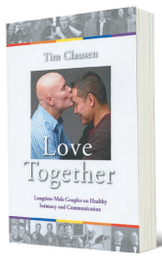
Local author Chandler (Shay O'Hanlon Caper series), plunges into darker waters with *Operation Stop Hate*. Protagonist Cailin McKenna, of the National Protection and Investigation Unit (NPIU), is called in on two Minneapolis school shooting cases seemingly linked to hate metal music being disseminated through a white supremacist terrorist group. Cailin not only knows one of the young killers, but circumstances become ever more twisted and personal — Cailin's step-brother is stabbed and her new romance threatened by her psychotic ex-girlfriend, who stops at literally nothing to get Cailin back. Captured by the terrorists, immured in an abandoned mine, Cailin has scant hours to escape and halt an attack in the Cities. The book launch will be April 16, 7 p.m. at Once Upon a Crime Bookstore, Minneapolis.

Writing Can Be Murder
Marilyn Rausch & Mary Donlon
Red Quill Press
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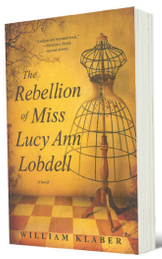
In the world of Rausch and Donlon, almost anything *Can Be Murder*, as we saw in the previous volumes, *Headaches*… and *Love*… This time, crime writer Chip Collingsworth himself comes upon a corpse: fellow crime author Patrick Finnegan, found dead in our local Once Upon a Crime bookstore the day they were to do a co-signing. As before, Chip's own life adventures mirror those of characters Agent Jo Schwann and Detective Mike Frisco in Collingsworth's current novel, *Head Shot*. The intricate plots swap back and forth yet the reader remains engaged in both the "real" and the "fictional" threads. A good read for anywhere, but the local ties of UMN and students in danger and a shootout at the Coffman Memorial Union shouldn't be missed.

Love Together: Longtime Male Couples on Healthy Intimacy and Communication
Tim Clausen
$18.95



Yes, gay men can love one another and find decades of happiness together. That is the lesson drawn from these two dozen interviews culled from the original 102. The book divides into six sections with the narratives of couples together 10–20 years, 20–30 years, and so on to 60–70 years, loving one partner. Steve Habgood (partner Mike Sadlek) confided, "I go back to those foundational elements; love, trust, respect." Most also cited a necessary sense of humor, a spirituality of some sort (though not necessarily a particular religion), monogamy (from yes, definitely, to not so much). Older respondents described love enduring when physical beauty and ability decline, while Eric, 83, spoke movingly of losing his husband, Eric, after 60 years together. A powerful, valuable read.

The Rebellion of Miss Lucy Ann Lobdell
William Klaber
St. Martin's Press
$25.99



William Klaber happened to move into the house in Basket Creek, New York, where Lucy Lobdell (1829-1912) lived 160 years ago. In 1855, Lucy, separated from her husband, left her parents' home, her young daughter, donned pants, and presented as Joseph, making her way in the world as a man. Joseph opened a dancing school, met a young woman, but fled when he was recognized. Klaber decided to flesh out Lobdell's story as a fictional memoir, lending power to this story of an "outsider" attempting to lead a normal life. Lobdell fled to the Minnesota Territory, lived there three years until discovery and a trial in Forest City, endured a breakdown, married a woman, lived in the forest as a hermit, and more. Much more. ■

DATELAND | BY JENNIFER PARELLO

What a Beaut!

A few weeks ago I turned on the TV and found myself at the very beginning of the Miss Universe Pageant. My first reaction was: "There's still a Miss Universe Pageant?" My second reaction was: "It's on network TV?" My third reaction was: "It's three hours long?!"

Naturally, I hurried to the kitchen to rustle up some snacks because there was no way I was going to miss this!

I hadn't watched a beauty pageant since I was a kid. They used to be major events back then…and I didn't even grow up in the South! Miss America was a big deal! Although, in retrospect, it was probably a big deal in the way quicksand is an important concern when you're a kid. You have no sense of perspective so you focus on weird things that you will never encounter in your adult life, like quicksand and beauty queens.

My grammar school friends and I would wager candy on who would be crowned Miss America. We'd watch Miss Universe, too, of course, but there was no wagering. We all agreed Miss United States would win. I was a child of the Cold War, so that was a given. I'm fairly certain that a member of the Reagan goon squad would have assassinated us if we cheered on anyone else.

Back to present day: The show kicked off in a melee of color, shrieking, and jerky camera angles. The announcer said that the most beautiful women in the world had come to Doral, Florida (!) for this pageant. But instead of showing the beauties, the camera scanned the audience, which was made up of Latin men and old perverts. There were only a couple hundred of them spread out in what appeared to be the banquet room of a Day's Inn.

And then, without preamble, we went immediately into the costume portion of the program.

It reminded me of the first time I saw a Kabuki show. I was mesmerized by the atonal weirdness for about fifteen minutes and then I got a migraine. The ladies paraded to the stage in alphabetical order, starting with Albania. Most were in elaborate get-ups constructed of sequins, feathers, and cardboard. They looked like a cross between a pterodactyl and a carburetor. Only the Northern Europeans tried to keep it classy. Austria looked as virginal and stern as Baroness Von Trapp. If a middle-aged lesbian is attracted to you, it's a pretty good bet that you don't stand a chance of making it to the semi-finals.

We finally got our first look at Miss United States — not Miss USA, which, apparently, is an altogether different thing, according to Wikipedia. I tried to read the entire 20-page Wikipedia article (note: the same length of Wikipedia's Nobel Prize article) so that I could write an informed review, but drifted off after the first paragraph.

Sadly, there was absolutely nothing interesting about Miss United States. So, I decided to root for Miss Italy, who was clearly perimenopausal. At one point the announcer said that Miss Italy had been a professional dancer for 15 years! It was the only time the other contestants broke their frozen smiles. They each scrunched their brows to mentally calculate how old that would make her.

"The announcer is trying to sabotage Miss Italy," I exclaimed to my viewing companion, who glanced up from her book, declared the competition a cross between a slave auction and a porn movie, and demanded I turn it off.

I gave her the side-eye, muttered "Feminist," and returned to my program.

I'm almost out of column space, but I have so much more to say about this event! I haven't even touched on the judges, who were clearly sleeping with the contestants, or the low-rent advertisements, which featured products straight out of the classified section of a comic book. So, I'll just end by saying I absolutely adored this show and have a grand idea for Miss Lesbian Universe, which I'll propose in a future column. ■





SKIRTING THE ISSUES | BY ELLEN KRUG

Bathrooms and Boardrooms

There are two kinds of rooms where business gets done: bathrooms and boardrooms. This is about both. As I pen this column in mid-March, there are at least four state legislatures debating bills that would ban a transgender person from accessing public restrooms according to his or her gender identity. (Reminder: "gender identity," as contrasted with "gender assigned at birth," aligns with a trans person's "true" gender — hence while I was born with male parts, my true gender is actually female.)

Thus, there's a bill in Florida that started out banning every gender variant person from any public restroom; it also imposed both criminal and civil penalties for those who violate the ban. The proposed law was later amended to allow public restroom access to trans persons whose gender identities match government-issued documents, like a driver's license or U.S. passport.

That's not much consolation for a very feminine-looking thirteen-year-old trans girl who wants to visit Disney World with her family — if the legislation becomes law, absent a passport she'd have to use the men's restroom at Space Mountain. How ironic when you consider the bill's purported purpose is to protect people from creepers (with Florida legislators believing trans persons are the creepers).

There's also pending legislation in Kentucky and Texas (a state where there are presently three different anti-trans bills) which criminalizes trans people who utilize bathrooms consistent with their "true" gender. In fact, one Texas bill makes it a "jail felony" for any business owner who "allows" (this would include unknowingly allowing) a trans person to utilize a "toilet facility" in the owner's building. Incredibly, the Kentucky bill and another Texas bill also have "bounty" provisions which allow anyone encountering a trans person in a school bathroom or locker room to sue the school district which owns the facility and automatically claim damages of $2500 (Kentucky) or $2000 (Texas).

How do people come up with this kind of stuff? Don't they have more pressing issues in Florida, Kentucky, and Texas?

Here in Minnesota — where I know we have way more important things to consider — conservative legislators introduced a bill targeting transgender students.

The proposed law, HF 1546, is a twofer: one provision prohibits students of opposite birth genders from competing on the same high school sports team, something that's intended to nullify a pro-trans policy enacted by the Minnesota State High School League last December. The proposed law's second part prohibits a public school from permitting a trans kid from using a restroom, locker room, or shower that's designated for students of the opposite sex. The law defines "sex" as "the physical condition of being male or female, which is genetically determined by a person's chromosomes and is identified at birth by a person's anatomy."

As I write, HF 1546 was denied "fast track" status and I don't know how the bill will ultimately fare. Many people tell me "no way will it become law." I'd like to think that; on the other hand, I never imagined that any Minnesota legislator would even introduce such an idiotic bill.

As a Minnesotan, I'm appalled that certain lawmakers (and their religious backers) want to intrude into the lives of young transgender persons. A chromosome test to determine where it's legal for you to pee? It would be hilarious if it wasn't so damn serious. After all, we're talking about the lives of people who already are bullied, marginalized, and desperate for acceptance.

Now for the boardroom, that place where another kind of business gets accomplished. Without question, corporate America is taking notice of what various states are attempting to do with criminalizing trans people. They're already well aware of the fact that same-sex marriage isn't solving a critical problem: the patchwork of laws that makes it extremely difficult to conduct business with GLBT employees generally.

As reported in a January 27, 2015 blog post by Equality Pennsylvania, the Chambers of Commerce from three of Pennsylvania's largest cities want across-the-board equal protection for GLBT people. The post quotes Rich Horrow, the President of the Independence Business Alliance, who said, "We have over 250 member businesses and…firmly believe that everyone should be protected from discrimination at work as well as in housing and places of public accommodation. […]The lack of protection is bad for business in the Commonwealth and can cause economic harm, leading to lower economic output for individuals and businesses."

An executive with Elsevier, a large Philadelphia corporation added, "Elsevier has over 464 employees here in Pennsylvania. We are global leaders in the development and dissemination of scientific, technological, and medical knowledge and we can't be that without hiring extremely talented and dedicated leaders in those fields. Our employees are the lifeblood of our business. That's why we do everything we can to provide a welcoming and safe environment at work. Protecting people from discrimination, including people who are gay or transgender, is about treating others as we would want to be treated. "

Sooner or later, dollars will win out over discrimination. I'm certain of it. The real question until then is how many trans people will we lose to suicide or addictions because of the repeated messages that we're not wanted?

I suspect it will be quite a few, unfortunately. ■

Ellie Krug is the author of Getting to Ellen: A Memoir about Love, Honesty and Gender Change. *She welcomes your comments at ellenkrugwriter@gmail.com.*

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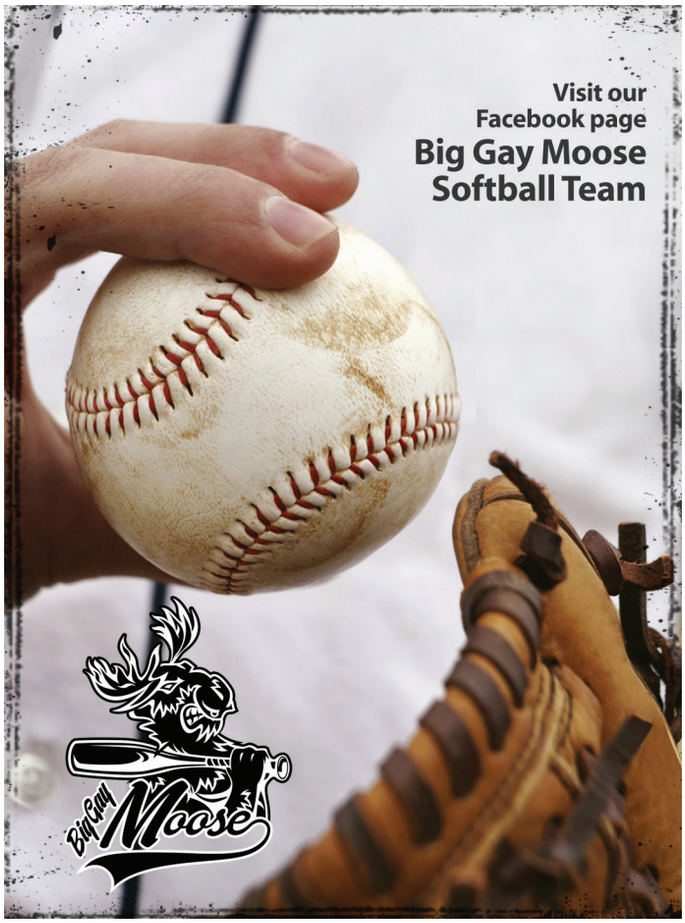
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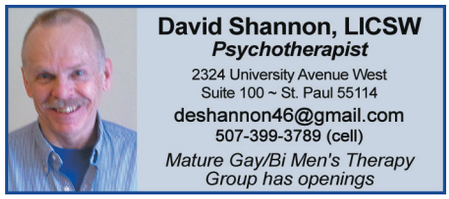
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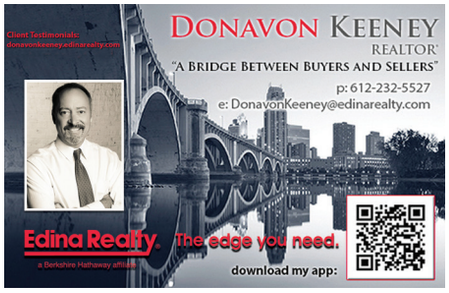


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THROUGH THESE EYES | BY JUSTIN JONES | ARTWORK BY JEANA LIDFORS

The Incubus & The Old Hag

Wide-eyed but falling to sleep, unable to move, unable to breathe, consumed in fear. Your night was like every other moments ago: lights off, eyes closed, waiting to drift away. But you've noticed something in your bedroom where there was nothing before, there in the corner, standing beside your window, silent, watchful, alive. You cannot scream. You cannot move. You struggle for air. Try closing your eyes because it's all just a dream. But it isn't. Reopen them onto a monstrous face filling your field of vision. The thing from your window is sitting on your chest now; its hands are wrapped around your throat.

This is not a nightmare. This is real.

In our formative years many of us experience what we call night terrors, bursts of sudden panic and inconsolability. Sufferers often bolt upright, scream, flail, and are left temporarily amnesic. Scary stuff for an 8-year-old.

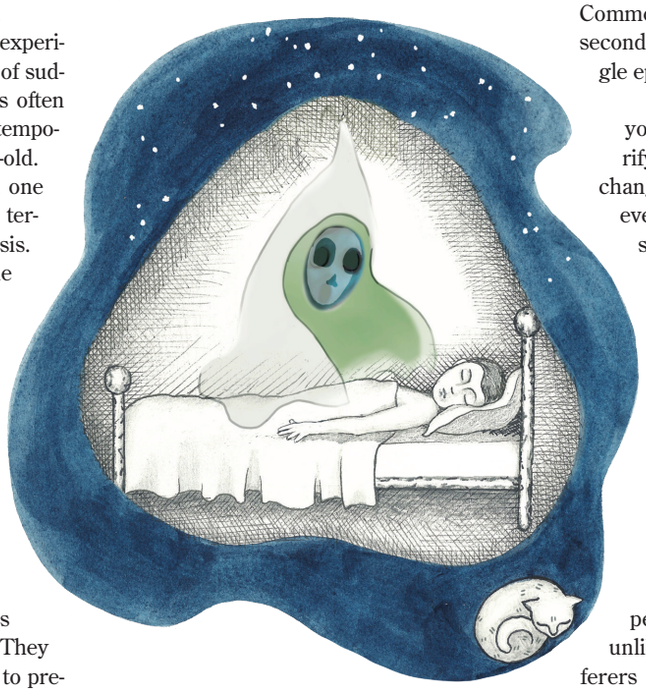
But the night terror has a sibling, one rarer, more mysterious, and far more terrifying than any dream: sleep paralysis. Fuseli's *Nightmare*. The Incubus. The Old Hag.

Those who experience sleep paralysis experience it maybe once or twice in their lifetimes. Maybe you've already awoken in the middle of the night with a strange pressure on your chest and an eerie feeling that someone else is in your room. You see impossible things. And pain. You feel pain.

When we fall asleep at night, our brains release a hormone that paralyzes our bodies in preparation for dreaming. They do this to keep us safe from ourselves, to prevent us from acting out our dreams. Likewise, our bodies know when they're dreaming — they accept whatever craziness we conjure up, which is why we don't hyperventilate when we're presented with otherwise unimaginable horrors. During sleep paralysis, however, our bodies get the timing wrong: our bodies paralyze themselves while we're still "awake" but continue to dream.

Unlike a traditional dream, we cannot wake up from — or "wake out of" — sleep paralysis simply by recognizing our peril. Suddenly realizing that we are experiencing sleep paralysis will not remedy an episode; our bodies will refuse to believe we're in a state of dreaming, and our minds won't so readily accept the strange visions surrounding us.

Likewise, legitimate pain may be imminent. As our brains often function on anticipation, we will sometimes predict what pain *would* feel like if whatever happens during sleep paralysis were to happen while we're awake. For example, in one of my most personally troublesome episodes, a faceless man sitting on the edge of my bed cut my forearm with a knife. Despite not *actually* knowing what this pain would feel like, my body anticipated what it would and the feeling I recognize as a deep paper cut — a pain I *definitely* remember — slid across my skin.



Perhaps more frightening is the accompanying sense of helplessness; experiencing sleep paralysing in bed beside your partner who is awake, for example, means being aware enough to know everything he's doing, but "asleep" enough to be unable to cry out for help. That you are paralyzed, he cannot know your distress.

Sleep paralysis feels so real that it is often mistaken for supernatural encounters: what one experiences during an episode is shocking enough to *know* it's unbelievable, but feels real enough that it *must* be real. Thus, sleep paralysis often serves as a scientific explanation behind ghostly premonitions. Those who endure only a few episodes in their lifetimes will easily mistake their hallucinations for actuality. How would they know any better?

At least one study estimates that four in ten people will experience sleep paralysis at least once in their lifetimes. Experiencing it more than a few times is exceedingly rare (I'm one of the lucky people who experience it three or more times a week). It happens in real time. Common episodes range in length from a few seconds to a couple of minutes, though a single episode could last for hours.

Sleep paralysis isn't all bad once you're used to it. What is at first terrifying becomes curious. The "visions" change, they become more complex, and even movement can be imagined. This sometimes affords chronic sufferers the ability to lucid dream, to control one's surroundings, for what takes the dreamer out of a dream is sometimes the realization that he's dreaming, while those in paralysis can both realize they're dreaming but cannot wake. This is a consolation prize at best. I've been able to pull this off only once in the thousands of times I've tried.

To cap this unworthy overview and to admit my own curiosity, it is perhaps most interesting to know that, unlike nightmares and terrors, whose sufferers experience completely different scenarios during their dreams, those who suffer sleep paralysis all report experiencing fundamental commonalities: a pressure on one's chest, mortal danger without cause, knowing that there is something in your bedroom that shouldn't be, and, most alarmingly, those who suffer sleep paralysis provide strikingly similar physical descriptions of that *thing that shouldn't be*. Which is why sleep paralysis has a couple of nicknames: The Incubus and the Old Hag.

Spooky stuff. ■



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